

Simon Stevin in 1599, although John Dee claimed to have invented a "compass of variation" in the 1550s.

This novel feature did indeed put Rotz's charts ahead of their time. He may have copied details from an earlier world map, although it is one of the very few errors in the admirable editorial text here to infer that he said he did. When he says "every leaf does begin there where the precedent of it did leave", he does not mean that he has copied his exemplar faithfully, but that each chart leaf fits on exactly where its predecessor leaves off. This is true, and the bearings carry over from each chart to the next. The picture is completed with a double hemisphere world map, based on the equatorial form of stereographic projection, itself of great originality (though described by contemporaries, it was not used again until the end of the century when Mercator made it famous).

The eleven regional charts are the earliest and most substantial monuments of the "Dieppe School" of cartography. Seven other atlases and eleven world maps survive based on the same source of material, the latest dated 1587, and mutual comparison (set out in fascinating detail here) reveals a great deal about the sources. Rotz's information was up to date to c. 1535-36 (he includes the results of Cartier's first voyage in 1534, but not of the second in the following year). The main source was, inevitably, Portuguese. There must have been Portuguese charts in Dieppe, and it is plausible suggested that these might have come, at one or two removes, from the Spanish *admiral's* general, the official chart of the Spanish empire, of which the Pilot-Major and other Crown Pilots were allowed to take and sell copies. From 1523 Diogo Ribeiro, a Portuguese, was the official cosmographer in Spain, and his influence can be seen in copies available in Italy and probably Normandy too. The place-names in the East Indies in Rotz's map are patently copied, if in corrupt forms, from Portuguese originals.

But the most important fact about Rotz's cartography is his insistence on accuracy. He does not invent detail when he does not know it, and though

he was sometimes misled (Labrador is unnaturally elongated, due to compass variation; Cape Cod becomes the outer South Carolina banks; and the west coast of South America is deformed, following Spanish tradition), he is careful to omit coastal stretches where he had no information. The picture thus built up is a complex one: the detail is strongest where French interests and experience lay. It is, as it were, a French empire in embryo to rival the Spanish and Portuguese. At the same time Rotz is careful to emphasize traditional English interests: the Grand Banks are marked in detail with the nearby legend "The new fonde londe quhar men goeth a fishing"; the North-West Passage is made to look misleadingly easy; and William Hawkins's 1530 expedition to Brazil for timber is picked up by Rotz's own experience.

We come now to the fascinating possibility that Rotz's East Indian detail indicates a French voyage that reached Australia. Most significant is a long and carefully drawn coastline corresponding with the east coast of Australia. In addition, a narrow channel divides "Lytil Java" from "the Londe of Java". There is evidence that the Portuguese tried, after Magellan's ship sailed from Timor to the Indian Ocean, to keep this to themselves, and later maps show a continuous land mass south from Java. Furthermore, later Dieppe maps include original French place-names among those taken over from Spanish and Portuguese. On balance, it seems likely that here again Rotz's source is Crignon, whose information could have come directly or indirectly from his voyage with the Parmentiers. Confirmation comes from the map of Sumatra to Gastaldi's maps for Ramusio's *Navigazioni e Viaggi* (1556). Clearly, French ambitions lay beyond the East Indies: they are nicely preserved in the legend across the Pacific in Diogo Homem's 1538 atlas; MARELEPARAMANTUM, the Parmentier's ocean. If they did not reach it, Australia and beyond was where they aimed to go.

Finally, there are Rotz's illustrative drawings. He was, clearly not a

professional artist, like Jean Sassi, but his naive depictions have the same fidelity as his cartography. His object is simple: to record the identifiable landmarks and habits of the natives or racial characteristics, and to indicate the wealth and possible exploitation of each part of the world. Thus, the pile-dwelling and rajah's procession situated in Malaya are clearly based on an authentic pictorial source (perhaps Sassi), as are the men clothed in loincloths and lungis. The figures in South Africa are recognizable Hottentots, and the Parmentier expedition's ambush in Madagascar is clearly depicted. The European figures and the Ka'ba at Mecca are by contrast conventionalized, although the rat-guards on the palm-trees suggest direct observation.

The great set piece is Rotz's elaborate account of the Tupinambá Indians, which spreads over most of the coast of South America. The natives are correctly shown naked except for one group ceremonially dancing and (rightly again) in feather skirts. A captive is being sacrificed with an accurately drawn club with a spherical end. A woman is roasting a human leg on the customary barbecue frame. The palisaded village with its quadrangle of long-houses enclosing stands for hammocks, each with a fire under to keep off flies, corresponds with contemporary descriptions. There is a small French stockade with cannon at the corners, and Indians are shown cutting down and barking the Brazilian wood with European tools, and exchanging it and also parrots for mirrors and such. (The Brazil-wood, *Caesalpinia echinata*, was much in demand: ground into dust, it was used as a red dye.) There is no suggestion of conventionalization, let alone invention, in all this. Its careful detail and clumsy liveliness are the clearest evidence that Rotz had seen it all with his own eyes.

This splendid object, promising still more exotic treasures, can hardly fail to have attracted Henry VIII's eye. But, again, Rotz's grand purpose was defeated. Henry's expansionist dreams drifted away as war with France and Scotland broke out again. Apart from a

wool, the records are silent about Rotz's activities, although he may have sailed to Scotland with Lord Lisle's fleet on the "Rough Wooing" in 1544. Peace with France in 1546 and Henry's imminent death may have suggested return to Rotz. He opened negotiations with the French ambassador, Odet de Selve, offering maps of England and Scotland and other useful information. He obtained licence to go to Dieppe for a short visit, prudently arranged to be arrested and by June 1547 was back in France to stay.

The rest of his career is simply told. Whether or not he succeeded in bringing his maps back with him, he resumed the trading that he had perhaps never abandoned. He became an *armateur* in the tradition of Anglo. His ships went to Guinea and the Caribbean. His Scotch connections enabled him to claim a grant of nobility, supported by letters from Mary of Guise, Regent of Scotland, and the Governor, James Hamilton, Earl of Arran and Duc de Chastelleraut. He took a leading part in the fitting out and command of the French invasion fleet planned in 1559-60 to restore the "Auld Alliance" and set Mary Queen of Scots firmly on the throne. But bad weather and the decline of the Guise interest brought this to nothing. Rotz is last heard of in command of two ships, probably still involved in that abortive affair.

Rotz was not wholly forgotten: Nicolas de Nicolay listed him among the leading navigators of the age from Portugal, Spain and France. His great book, however, was put aside, no doubt, when Henry VIII's interest passed from empire abroad to affairs nearer home, both the "Boke" and the "Traicte" vanished into some neglected part of the royal library, perhaps at Westminster. They were not among the globes and maps kept in the private gallery at Whitehall in Queen Elizabeth's time, so Sir Humphrey Gilbert and Hakluyt never saw them. Instead Verrazano's old map became their bible: the loss was great, for Verrazano's North America was far more accurate than Rotz's, with all its faults. To all intents and purposes, the neglect continued until about 1681, when Pepys wrote in his naval minutes: "Examine very well the

King's Library at St James's, and particularly the hydrographical draughts presented to Henry 8th by John Rois, a servant of his. Whether an Englishman or no." Ironically, in less than twenty years any hope of answering Pepys's question disappeared. In 1694 the English bombardment of Dieppe destroyed any of Rotz's work that may have survived there; in 1698 the palace of Whitehall was burnt down and with it any further charts or maps of his left behind in the royal map collection. Not for another century did anyone attempt to appraise the "Boke", and it is very much to the credit of Admiral James Burney that he recognized its importance in his *Chronological History of the Discoveries in the South Sea or Pacific Ocean* (1803). It is only now, however, that its full significance can be appreciated as a major document of the discovery of the world's surface at the time of its most rapid development.

It is hard to overpraise the thoroughness and skill with which the general editor, Helen Wallis, and her coadjutors, Janet Backhouse, D. B. Quinn, P. E. H. Hair, W. Stanford Reid, W. C. Sturtevant and Alder Roger Desreumaux, have sifted the evidence, compared Rotz's account with other surviving documents, cartographic, pictorial and literary, and restored him to the place which, as author of this noble work, he deserves. Their task has been made much harder by the fluid state of knowledge at the time and the low rate of survival of evidence - maps were designed for use and use and subsequent damage destroyed much valuable evidence. Besides this notable contribution to the history of exploration, their work is a landmark in the study of navigation, and the ethnological evidence of Rotz's drawings is shown to be of great importance. The printers, the Oxford University Press, have made a superb job of reproducing the great maps in colour. All these interests owe an incalculable debt to the munificence of Lord Eccles in making Rotz's work available to others, as well as presenting it to the Roxburghe Club which in all its history has never received so generous a benefaction.

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American History 493	Jewish History 497
Anthropology 475-6	Literary Criticism 479-80
Art 477	Political Philosophy 482
Biography and Literature 478	Politics and War 483, 490-91
Commentary 486-7	Psychology 492
English History 484	Religion 494
Fiction 481, 498-99	Russia 495
French Literature 496	Theatre 485

INDEX OF BOOKS REVIEWED

BARNETT, ANTHONY *Iron Britannia* [Geoffrey Wheatcroft]
 BATSON, C. DANIEL, and VENTIS, W. LARRY *The Religious Experience: A social-psychological perspective* [John W. Bowker]
 BERRY, ADRIAN *The Super-Intelligent Machine: An electronic Odyssey* [Stuart Sutherland]
 BISHOP, PATRICK, and WITHEROW, JOHN *The Winter War: The Falklands* [Geoffrey Wheatcroft]
 BLAVIER, ANDRÉ *Les Fous littéraires* [W. D. Redfern]
 BRYSON, NORMAN *Word and Image: French painting of the Ancien Régime* [Richard Wollheim]
 BURNIER, MICHEL-ANTOINE *Le Testament de Sartre* [Anne Whitmarsh]
 CALVERT, PETER *The Falklands Crisis: The rights and the wrongs* [Geoffrey Wheatcroft]
 CLARKE, SIMON *Marx, Marginalism and Modern Sociology: From Adam Smith to Max Weber* [Kenneth Minogue]
 COLOMBO, JOHN ROBERT (Editor) *Windigo: An anthology of fact and fantastic fiction* [Mark Abley]
 CRIGHTON MILLER, STUART *Benevolent Assimilation: The American conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903* [Hugh Brogan]
 DALYELL, TAM *One Man's Falklands* . . . [Geoffrey Wheatcroft]
 DEMOS, JOHN PUTNAM *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the culture of early New England* [Alan Macfarlane]
 DU BOS, CHARLES *Robert et Elizabeth Browning ou la plénitude de l'amour humain* [Alethea Hayter]
 EDDY, PAUL, and others *The Falklands War* [Geoffrey Wheatcroft]
 Falkland Islands Review: Report of a Committee of Privy Counsellors [Geoffrey Wheatcroft]
 FERNANDEZ, CARLOS *Paracuellos del Jarama: ¿Carrillo culpable?* [Paul Preston]
 FOX, ROBERT *Eyewitness Falklands* [Geoffrey Wheatcroft]
 FREDERICKS, CASEY *The Future of Eternity: Mythologies of science fiction and fantasy* [T. A. Shippey]
 FREEMAN, DEREK *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The making and unmaking of an anthropological myth* [James Clifford]
 FRUDE, NEIL *The Intimate Machine: Close encounters with the new computers* [Stuart Sutherland]
 FULLER, JOHN *Flying to Nowhere: A Tale. The Beautiful Inventions* [David Nokes]
 GIBSON, IAN *Paracuellos: cómo fue* [Paul Preston]
 GORN, JOSEPH *The British Labour Movement and Zionism 1917-1948* [William J. Fishman]
 GRADLEY, ROY EV *The Brownings and France* [Alethea Hayter]
 HABGGER, ALFRED *Gender, Fantasy, and Realism in American Literature* [T. A. Shippey]
 HARRIS, ROBERT *Gotchal: The media, the government and the Falklands crisis* [Geoffrey Wheatcroft]
 HART-DAVIS, RUPERT (Editor) *The Lyttelton Hart-Davis Letters: Volume Five 1960* [Humphrey Carpenter]
 HASSETT, CONSTANCE W. *The Elusive Self in the Poetry of Robert Browning* [Alethea Hayter]
 HASTINGS, MAX, and JENKINS, SIMON *The Battle for the Falklands* [Geoffrey Wheatcroft]
 JAY, ELISABETH (Editor) *The Evangelical and Oxford Movements* [Brian Martin]
 INGALLS, RACHEL *Blinstead's Safari* [Adam Mars-Jones]
 JENKINS, ELISABETH *The Tortoise and the Hare* [Mary Furness]
 JOLLY, RICK *The Red and Green Life Machine: A diary of the Falklands Field Hospital* [Geoffrey Wheatcroft]
 KELLY, AILEEN *Mikhail Bakunin: A study in the psychology and politics of utopianism* [Leonard Schapiro]
 MACAULAY, ROSE *Told by an Idiot. The World My Wilderness* [Lindsay Duguid]
 MACFARLANE, I. D. and MACLEAN, IAN (Editors) *Montaigne: Essays in memory of Richard Sayce* [D. G. Coleman]
 MCGOWAN, ROBERT, and HANDS, JEREMY *Don't Cry For Me, Sergeant-Major* [Geoffrey Wheatcroft]
 MAIN, GLORIA L. *Tobacco Colony: Life in early Maryland, 1650-1720* [Betty Wood]
 MANLOVE, C. N. *The Impulse of Fantasy Literature* [T. A. Shippey]
 MENDEL, ARTHUR P. *Michael Bakunin: Roots of Apocalypse* [Leonard Schapiro]
 POSTMAN, NEIL *The Disappearance of Childhood* [Adrian Woolfbridge]
 PRESTON, ANTHONY *Sea Combat off the Falklands* [Geoffrey Wheatcroft]
 RAPHAEL, CHAIM *The Springs of Jewish Life* [Geza Vermes]
 ROWSE, A. L. *Eminent Elizabethans* [Patrick Collinson]
 SALMON, ERIC *Granville Barker: A secret life* [Michael Holroyd]
 SANDEL, MICHAEL J. *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* [Roger Scruton]
 SCHLOIBIN, ROGER C. (Editor) *The Aesthetics of Fantasy Literature and Art* [T. A. Shippey]
 SEWARD, DESMOND *Richard III* [R. L. Storey]
 SHAW, GRAHAM *The Cost of Authority: Manipulation and freedom in the New Testament* [J. L. Houlden]
 SHORE, BRADD *Sala'ilua: A Samoan mystery* [James Clifford]
 SIMPFIELD, ALAN *Literature in Protestant England 1560-1660* [H. R. Woudhuysen]
 SPEED, KEITH *Sea Change: The battle for the Falklands and the future of Britain's navy* [Geoffrey Wheatcroft]
 SPITZER, LEO *Essays on Seventeenth-century French Literature* [A. J. Krallshelmer]
 STRACHEY, JULIA *Julia: A Portrait by Herself and Frances Partridge* [Rosemary Dinnage]
 TADIE, JEAN-YVES *Le Roman d'aventures* [Annette Lavers]
 TREHERNE, JOHN *The Galapagos Affair* [John Stokes]
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 VIDAL, GORE *Duluth* [Pearl K. Bell]
 VILLA, SUBIR HOGGASIAN and MATOSSIAN, MARY KILBOURN *Armenian Village Life before 1914* [John A. C. Greppin]
 WAGGONER, HYATT H. *American Visionary Poetry* [Imre Salusinszky]
 WALSH, MICHAEL J. *Vulcan City State* [Peter Hebblethwaite]
 WATERHOUSE, KEITH *In the Mood* [J. K. L. Walker]
 WOLF, CHRISTA *No Place on Earth* [Margaret Moffatt]

COMMENTARY
 Exhibitions *Elias Ashmole* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) [Blair Worden]
A Month in the Country (Victoria and Albert Museum) [Elizabeth Winter]
 Television and Radio *When We Are Married: Dear Counsellors* (Radio 4) [Peter Kemp]
 Theatre *Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker: The Roaring Girl* (Barbican Theatre) [Stephen Wall]
Nick Drake: The Body (The Pit, Barbican) [Rosalind Wiseman]
A Horde of Unemployed Ventriloquists (Cortado Theatre) [Patricia Craig]
 American notes
 Author, Author [Christopher Hitchens]
 Criminal proceedings [T. J. Binyon]
 Paperback fiction in brief [Patricia Craig]
 Poems by D. J. Enright, Gavin Ewart
 Letters on Language Acquisition, 'Quality and Concept', Reviving Yiddish etc.
 Among this week's contributors

ANTHROPOLOGY

DEREK FREEMAN

Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth
379pp. Harvard University Press.
£11.95.
0674 548302

BRADD SHORE

Sala'ilua: A Samoan Mystery
338pp. Columbia University Press.
\$18.20.
0231 053827

These two books are about a well-known place called Samoa and, in different ways, about the problem of representing it. Both wrestle with Margaret Mead's legacy. Derek Freeman's book lends itself to headlines (front page news in the *New York Times*). Mead was "wrong": Samoans are not the casual, permissive people she made famous, but are beset by all the usual human tensions. They are violent. They get ulcers. According to Freeman, Mead's version was systematic wishful thinking. Bradd Shore also disagrees with Mead, but less absolutely; and it is important to read his intricate study - surely the best synthetic account of Samoa to date - along with Freeman's polemic. Otherwise one is left with a stark contrast: Mead's non-violent, sexually liberated Pacific world, and now Freeman's Samoa of seething tensions, strict controls, and violent outbursts.

Indeed, Mead and Freeman form a kind of diptych whose opposing panels signify a recurrent Western ambivalence about the "primitive". (One is reminded of Melville's Typee, a sensuous Pacific paradise woven through with dread, the threat of violence, feelings of confinement.) *Sala'ilua* largely transcends this pastoral-demonic ambivalence. It portrays a multi-faceted Samoa, and it takes seriously the difficulties of cultural interpretation. As an ethnographer Shore has all the credentials: five years of fieldwork, a grasp of both formal and informal Samoan dialects, intensive work in a single village and familiarity with the major islands of the region. Still, he calls his analysis of *fa'a Samoa* (Samoa's distinctive style or custom) a "myth". His book is superficially organized as a detective story - the explanation of a traumatic murder in

the village of Sala'ilua. But its subtitle refers also to the mystery of a way of life which embraces contradictory essences, indeed whose essence may be contradiction itself.

Professor Freeman, a distinguished Pacific ethnographer, has been inspired by recent developments in sociology. He is ready to cast doubt on all strictly cultural accounts of human behaviour. Dedicated to Karl Popper, *Margaret Mead and Samoa* presents itself as a rigorous, scientific "refutation". But ethnography is not a natural science, where one exception

The other side of paradise

James Clifford

falsify a powerful cultural fiction one must substitute a potent and persuasive counter-fiction.

Freeman begins by undermining Mead's research paradigm. In four chapters entitled "The Emergence of Cultural Determinism" he provides a sketchy intellectual history of the nature-nurture controversy during the decades preceding Mead's departure for Samoa in 1925. Franz Boas and his followers are engaged in a bitter controversy with the eugenicists heirs of Francis Galton. Two explanations for the variations of human behaviour,

Freeman makes gestures towards a promising historicist argument that could situate these liberal assumptions in the utopian moment of the 1920s. But his central aim is to discredit the "Boasian paradigm", whose "absolute cultural determinism" he illustrates from the writings of Boas, A. L. Kroeber, Robert Lowie, and others. (Significantly, he is unable to catch Mead making a systematically determinist claim.) But Freeman's way with quotations - which are cut up small and woven into his own intensifying assertions - marks his history as tendentious. He cites only

the biological explanation of socio-cultural phenomena". (Typically, Freeman's citation hardens Kroeber's position by omitting "anti-reductionist".) It is now common among historians and sociologists of science to view competition for epistemological domains and objects of study as inseparable from the advance of knowledge. The interrelation of ideological and scientific, political and rational processes, particularly in the human sciences, is a focus of continuing debate. Freeman is either ignorant of this debate or chooses to ignore it. For him, the Boasians' struggle to establish a cultural paradigm was simply ideological, a matter of extreme "doctrines" and "beliefs". But there is good reason to be sceptical of histories of science written by practitioners who confidently judge the excesses of their predecessors from the standpoint of a "more scientific paradigm". Freeman's new paradigm turns out to be only a series of polemical arguments to a possible account of biological and cultural interaction. And his own book, under cover of a scientific "refutation", is itself deeply polemical, an attack on a stereotyped opponent, seeking to win space for a new approach.

In fact, Freeman never seriously confronts any major "culturalist" argument, and he ignores culturalism's most sophisticated modern forms, which are hermeneutic and semiotic. He trains his guns on a weak position, Mead's early Samoan research, long acknowledged in anthropological circles to be problematic. In his central ten chapters Freeman's pattern of argument becomes numbingly familiar. Each section begins with a few of Mead's most extreme generalizations, without giving any attention to her evidence, qualifications, or specific mode of analysis. These spare quotations are then followed with massed counter-examples drawn uncritically from the historical record and from Freeman's own fieldwork. Contrary to Mead's assertions, Samoan children may be violently punished, rape is common, intense status competition reigns, adolescent stress can lead to delinquency. But 170 pages of overkill merely show over and over what was already well known (and can easily be deduced from an alert reading of *Coming of Age in Samoa*), that Mead constructed a foreboding, idealized picture, openly designed to propose



A Kwakiutl ceremonial curtain which depicts Sisiutl, the double-headed serpent, beneath a rainbow, ravens and copper, from The Way of the Masks (249 pp. Cape. £15. 0 224 02081 1) by Claude Lévi-Strauss.

can, in principle, falsify an established truth. Ethnographies are complex, realistic fictions derived from research in historical circumstances that can never be fully controlled: A score of counter-examples may not discredit a convincingly illustrated portrait of a culture. The discordant facts may be seen to reflect merely a different village or island, a different epoch, research strategy, personal temperament, etc. (Freeman's refutation has already been challenged by anthropologists noting that he worked primarily in a different part of Samoa from Mead, and decades later.) To

"two fervently held half-truths", contend "for outright mastery". Mead, a student of Boas, is sent to Samoa to conduct an experiment that will establish once and for all the power of cultural over biological accounts. (Freeman's portrayal of the youthful Mead as little more than an agent of "Papa Franz" is, to say the least, condescending.) The good student fulfils her assignment by producing an anthropological classic, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, whose argument for the variability of the seemingly natural life-stage of adolescence quickly becomes liberal dogma.

What Freeman reveals is the struggle for a scientific paradigm. Boasians (like Durkheimians in France) had to fight to establish a domain of specifically "cultural" (or "social") facts. Kroeber saw the argument as "anti-reductionist", a protest against independence from the dominance of

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Abroad thoughts from home

Alethea Hayter

ROY E. GRIDLEY

The Brownings and France: a chronicle with commentary
331pp. Athlone Press. £18.
0 485 11231 0

CHARLES DU BOS

Robert et Elizabeth Browning ou la plénitude de l'amour humain
177pp. Paris: Klincksieck. 82fr.
2 86563 033 3

CONSTANCE W. HASSETT

The Elusive Self in the Poetry of Robert Browning
175pp. Ohio University Press.
£13.50
0 8214 0629 9

"France – more than Italy and often more than England – was for Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning the scene of what was most interesting and significant in their contemporary culture." With this bold affirmation Roy Gridley sets out, in *The Brownings and France*, to redress what he sees as an error of emphasis in the usual estimate of the Brownings' scale of values; to show how much time they spent in France, how many friends they had in the Paris literary world, how much they read and were influenced by contemporary French literature and political theory. In pursuit of this theme, he seems at times to be simply compiling an anthology of references to France and things French in the Brownings' letters, even to the point of listing the French tags in their love-letters to each other. Diaries of the Brownings' visits to France alternate with summaries and analyses of poems about France, or written there, or influenced by French models, and some of these examples have a dragged-in effect.

It is, however, useful to have such a meteorological report on the intellectual climate within which much of the Brownings' poetry burgeoned, particularly to trace the currents of influence from Balzac, and to a lesser extent Stendhal and Flaubert, to Browning. The danger of this contextualizing, valuable as it often proves, is

that it can degenerate into "he must have felt" speculation or "had he but known" irrelevancies, and *The Brownings and France* is not free from these. The sympathies which might have been felt between Browning and some of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* writers of the 1850s, had either side then known each other's work, are too hypothetical to tell us much about Browning, as is a list of the French writers who might have influenced Pauline if Browning had read them before he wrote it. Professor Gridley has a good and valid point to make about the Brownings, but he has rather spoilt it by swinging the pendulum too far. He underestimates the Brownings' other attachments, national and literary, in order to strengthen his thesis about their debt to France; at times he sounds as if he thought they read nothing at all but French literature.

He has much more to say about Browning than about his wife. His thoughtful and thoroughly researched analyses of some of Browning's later poems in French settings, particularly of *Red Cotton Night-Cap Country* and the real-life case behind it, do much to illuminate these opaque poems. His comments on Elizabeth Barrett Browning mostly relate to *Aurora Leigh*, for which he finds some new sources in Balzac. His opinion of the work is expressed by his singling out for quotation, twice over, one adverse contemporary criticism of it, and by his suggestion that "Chateaubriand's *Balzac*", Flaubert's phrase for him, Browning was imaginatively unique but temperamentally the most normal of men. For Browning's unique imagination he finds a richly grotesque imagery – a huge and swarming antheap, a virgin jungle untouched by the axe-blows of logic, the single bone from which a whole giant prehistoric skeleton can be deduced – which might have come from the mind it describes. He is less discerning on Mrs Browning's poetry; he deeply admires her "sane judgment and mental balance", he usefully distinguishes between her physical delicacy and her intellectual muscle, but of her poetry he admires only the over-rated *Sonnets from the Portuguese*.

A study of this kind will be scorned as out-of-date, belletristic and soft-centred by many academic critics

very strong central theme, that "in the world of feeling the love story of the Brownings is a masterpiece in the same class as that of an ode by Keats or a painting by Giorgione in the world of art". Such a theme is not likely to make this book popular with the debunkers of the Brownings' happy marriage, but Du Bos is unequivocal in his conviction that the Brownings achieved the plenitude of human love, and demonstrated that happiness was possible – not only the fleeting bliss of the moment, but the lasting happiness of a love that develops and changes but always increases.

The book, part of which he revised in 1951, after his return to devout Catholic faith, is written from a Christian standpoint and is to some extent concerned with the relationship between human and divine love, but very little with the background to the Brownings' lives or with influences on their work. The evolution towards the "plenitude of human love" is traced through a small selection of the Brownings' poetry. Pauline is seen as Browning's first self-revelation, his growing-out of Shelley and atheism and into a powerful imaginative awareness of the richness of God and Nature, but as yet only an awareness, not a love. His developing understanding and experience of love are traced in *Johannes Agricola in Meditation*, in *By the Fireside*, in *Two in the Campagna*, and Elizabeth Barrett's in *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. Du Bos is no believer in Browning the neurotic; for him, Browning was imaginatively unique but temperamentally the most normal of men. For Browning's unique imagination he finds a richly grotesque imagery – a huge and swarming antheap, a virgin jungle untouched by the axe-blows of logic, the single bone from which a whole giant prehistoric skeleton can be deduced – which might have come from the mind it describes. He is less discerning on Mrs Browning's poetry; he deeply admires her "sane judgment and mental balance", he usefully distinguishes between her physical delicacy and her intellectual muscle, but of her poetry he admires only the over-rated *Sonnets from the Portuguese*.

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today, and it does indeed contain statements and opinions which later readers has invalidated. For instance, Du Bos believed in the authenticity of the 1847 "Reading edition" of the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, later shown to be a forgery by T. J. Wise; he maintains that Browning was virtually self-educated, unaware of the details of his attendance at Peckham School and London University which John Maynard has now unveiled in his *Browning's Youth*. Nevertheless, in the brief but highly charged pages of Du Bos's book, the reader feels in contact with a spacious, mature and civilized mind, and meanders with pleasure through the long, intricately looped but elegantly lucid French paragraphs. It is refreshing to encounter a specimen of that present-day rarity, a book by a writer who wholeheartedly admires his subject and has no wish to score off him, to catch him out, to expose his feet of clay, or to show off at his expense.

Constance Hassett, in *The Elusive Self in the Poetry of Robert Browning*, is not out to trip up her subject or expose any unseemly extremities. Her book is about Browning and self-knowledge, but she allows his historical self to remain elusive; what she is interested in is his poetry about other people's experience of achieving, or not achieving, self-knowledge. The confessional mode of his monologues can be more than mere reminiscence, it can lead to self-confrontation and moral conversion; or it can be a "confession manquée" which leaves the speaker still deliberately self-deceived. Hassett classifies different types of successful and unsuccessful "conversions" in analyses of encounters with the self in Browning's poetry from *Sordello* to *The Ring and The Book*. Some of her examples seem a little bent or squeezed to fit her thesis, but there are many thoughtful

perceptions which will be of value to students battling with some of Browning's more ambiguous poems, such as *Andrea del Sarto* and *Peter Ichniotes*, and some happy phrases to describe mental manoeuvres: "the strategic self-indictment", the play to forestall criticism "smoothed with a tell-tale symmetry and rehearsed glide".

These three books shade across the spectrum from literary biography to the most austere critical analysis, and cast three different kinds of illumination on the Brownings and their works. Gridley's is like a street lamp which sheds an impartial light equally on the couple strolling under it, on the many other passers-by who observe and are observed by the couple, on the houses and perhaps the pavement under their feet and the gutter over which they step. The Brownings are seen in relation to their surroundings, but the light of the street-lamp is not very piercing. Du Bos's book is more like the warm glow of an open fire by which the couple are sitting. It illuminates the couple themselves with a strong caressing light, but you see little of their surroundings, though a holy picture, and busts of Bergson and Flaubert, can be seen dimly on the mantelpiece in the flickering firelight. By the third formal illumination, in Hassett's book, the figures of the couple have vanished – Mrs Browning remains not as a human being but as a system of perfectly imperfectly formed patterns seen under the pin-point light of the crystallographer's goniometer. Each type of focus, from the broadest to the narrowest, does disclose something about the Brownings and their poetry, but perhaps the most enjoyable is the focus which preserves the original meaning of that word and lets us look at the Brownings "By The Fireside".

Fizzling slowly out

Humphrey Carpenter

RUPERT HART-DAVIS (Editor)

The Lyttelton Hart-Davis Letters: Correspondence of George Lyttelton and Rupert Hart-Davis – Volume Five 1960
196pp. John Murray. £12.50.
0 7195 3999 4

There is something about the publication of this correspondence that is faintly reminiscent of "The Archers". For a start, it seems to have been going on for an immensely long time (Volume Five, and a sixth is promised). And like the radio serial, it doesn't really seem to be about anything; just a parade of familiar characters to and fro, with little cliff-hanger crises to keep our interest up – will Ruth's boy come through his heart operation? can Adam come back from this half at Elton with as many prizes as he collared last time? can Rupert get through his Oscar Wilde proofs in time?

I attended Jonathan Cape's memorial service at St Martin's, and took the chair for my old friend William Plomer when he read some of his poems to a collection of old dames in Foyle's bookshop. . . . Altogether the week was endiashly wearing.

This is Rupert Hart-Davis in full spate, and cries of "Oo, arr", or "Have another pint, lad", would not seem inappropriate. Actually that is about as much as George Lyttelton usually has to say in his replies; and who can blame him?

Probably the entire English-speaking world now knows that this correspondence originated in 1935 when Lyttelton, who had taught Hart-Davis at Eton, complained that nobody wrote to him in his retirement. R. H. D. immediately complied, and who can fault him for good nature towards old schoolmates? But it seems that at quite an early stage Sir Rupert contemplated publication. About half-way through this volume we have Lyttelton packing up all the letters he had so far received, and sending them back, as per instruction,

so that they would be all ready to posterity. "They are superb!" he cries on re-reading them. Well, really, no, they're not. The *bon mots* are chiefly secondhand, the gossip very unpungent and the literary chat mostly falls flat. Take their little discussion of Trollope, for example: George has been re-reading *The Warden*, and tentatively advances the opinion that it is awfully bad. Rupert replies: "I am not a Trollope fan, but only perhaps through lack of leisure. I mean, I'm all for him but haven't read him." Again and again, the thing fizzles out in this fashion.

Perhaps even harder to forgive is the failure on Hart-Davis's part to give us any portraits of contemporaries. For much of this volume he's possessing Great Men to give up their MSS for a sale in aid of the London Library. Eliot, Massie, Forster and many others are canvassed and do their duty (Eliot laboriously copies out the whole of *The Waste Land* for him, finding this a most terrible drudge). But such encounters only produce stuff like this from the Hart-Davis pen:

I found the dear old man surrounded with sheets of the manuscript of *A Passage to India*; which he was vainly trying to put in order for me. I told him I'd do all that for him, swept it up and took it back to London.

Forster reappears in the letters when he comes in for some rather heart-breaking criticism: "It is odd that no one has ever set about debunking him". In fact the only moment when which the book comes alive are when Hart-Davis lashes out at someone.

After writing a polite obituary of Jonathan Cape in *The Times* he admits that Cape was really "one of the tightest-fisted old bastards I've ever encountered". And there is some rough treatment of Eden's memoirs ("drearily turgid", "like chunks of the day-before-yesterday's newspaper" written by a civil service clerk), and of a Bishop of Oxford who "suppose no one can stop between his teeth, grumbles R.H.D." but he ought to sense the right verdict to stop. . . . Alas, the same verdict might be passed on the publication of this correspondence.

ROGER C. SCHLOBIN (Editor)

The Aesthetics of Fantasy Literature and Art
288pp. Brighton: Harvester. £18.95.
0 7108 0378 6

CASEY FREDERICKS

The Future of Eternity: Mythologies of Science Fiction and Fantasy
229pp. Indiana University Press (distributed in the UK by IBD).
£13.50 (paperback, £5.97).
0 253 32530 7

C. N. MANLOVE

The Impulse of Fantasy Literature
174pp. Macmillan. £20.
0 333 33393 4

ALFRED HABEGGER

Gender, Fantasy and Realism in American Literature
378pp. Columbia University Press.
£23.
0 231 05396 7

"It is difficult to write about a real person," T. H. White made this remark, though typically he made it at the end of his attempt to summarize the character of Guenevere, and what he meant by it was that for him the contradictions of this fictional character's role in several plots – best explained as the result of a tangle of traditions – were a stamp of authenticity. It is a tactical remark by a fantasist aspiring towards realism. However the point is made harder and more honestly by George Eliot in *Adam Bede*:

Falseness is easy, truth so difficult. The pencil is conscious of a delightful facility in drawing a griffin – the longer the claws, and the larger the wings, the better; but that marvellous facility which we mistook for genius is apt to forsake us when we want to draw a real unexaggerated lion. . . . I turn, without shrinking, from cloudborne angels, from prophets, sibyls, and heroic warriors, to an old woman bending over her flower-pot or eating her solitary dinner. . . .

There is the charge against fantasy: it is grandiose, but cheap. There is nothing to check it against. It was a brilliant stroke by Roger Schlobin to let George Eliot state the case against so powerfully in the Preface to his collection of essays on *The Aesthetics of Fantasy*; all one needs next is an equally convincing case for.

Not surprisingly, this is still to seek, largely as a result of the timidity of professional critics. Professor Schlobin himself will not admit or counter the spontaneous agreement of the Eliot quotation above, preferring to write it off as "all too clearly . . . the predominant nineteenth-century attitude", and so to suggest that it is, not wrong, but outdated. Far too many of his contributors opt to follow this lead, rehearsing such unconvincing arguments as that fantasy novels win awards (so they must be good), that there are a great many of them (same inference), or that fantasy is becoming intellectually respectable and a "major mode" (more "assertion", which provokes: "Indifferently assert or deny! Yet there is a case which could be stated. Fantasy seems to be a remarkably enduring mode, which appears spontaneously even when official culture (as in modern centuries) is strongly against it. Presumably it must be doing something, or people would not put so much effort into it, or draw so much pleasure out. But what?"

The Schlobin collection begins, promisingly enough, with definitions. Ray K. Wolfe declares that fantasy "must first and foremost deal with the impossible". Other contributors echo this. C. N. Manlove says that fantasy has to have "a substantial and irreducible element" of the "supernatural or impossible". Jules Zanger that fantasy demands disbelief and cannot remain fantasy without it. From that agreement, though, many lines of possibility emerge. Zanger is convinced that fantasy reveals those "dark points at which the real world

Taking pleasure in impossibility

T. A. Shippey

chafes", as for instance when William Morris in the 1890s wrote his vague romances of worlds before the time-clock or the production-line; so fantasy is a plaster over a wound. Wolfe sees the genre as creating an "emerging ideational structure" by complex dialectic process: so fantasy is there to indicate "deeper meanings . . . old truths . . . more fundamental convictions". Francis J. Molson points to the preparative function of "Ethical Fantasy for Children", Robert Crossley to the link between "Faerie" and "Utopia". George P. Landow to elements of release, entertainment and fun. None of these arguments, though, except Wolfe's, seems able to claim anything but a minor if necessary role for impossible fictions: the phrases "escapism" and "wish-fulfilment" hang unanswered or gently modified in the air. Wolfe's argument too (compelling though it is, and in spite of its acute summation of the "necessary strategies" of fantasy) hovers on the edge of issues of belief beyond argument. As several writers see, the attitudes to fantasy of convinced Christians like C. S. Lewis or Charles Williams are inherently different from, and much more comfortable than, the attitudes of (one surmises) agnostics like Sprague de Camp or Ursula Le Guin.

What the Schlobin volume does, in fact, is to pepper its target. It is full of the uncommittedness, the dreadful fluent verbosity of the modern professional critic, and essay after essay ends on a shrug: "we need playthings as well as monuments" (W. R. Inge), only time will tell (Molson), "A man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?" (Raymond H. Thompson). Still, directions are indicated. We would like to know why people flirt with the impossible; how fantasy relates to realism; how it is affected by belief-structures; whether it is in fact for some reason psychologically necessary.

Casey Fredericks's *The Future of Eternity* manages to answer none of these questions in the end, but it does at least show a good deal more heart. Its goal is to trace the impact of old mythology on new fantasy and science fiction: why have so many authors rewritten stories from ancient times, as if unable to leave them alone? In pursuit of this goal a great deal of material is unearthed (which will make matters simpler for successors), and an interesting theory put forward, namely that both myth and science fiction depend on dislocation, discontinuity, estrangement, "decentration". Tolkien's Ents are impossible, to follow one of Fredericks's examples; but they make us think (for an instant) what trees would say if. . . . So maybe the Tolkien-reading axeman hesitates a moment longer, or even in the end joins the Ecology party. The fantasy Ents change our awareness, the awareness we have always had, of real-life trees.

One feels that George Eliot might have hesitated for an instant over a developed form of that argument, which is something. Unfortunately Fredericks – though arguing honestly and boldly for a general "horizontal" knowledge of many fields rather than the "vertical" specialization of modern times – is not up to myth-theory. And more accidentally, though more interestingly, he too shows a fatal hesitation over an issue glimpsed elsewhere: namely, whether modern fantasy does not have a more than coincidental nexus with modern fascism.

That query never reaches the surface of the Schlobin collection, but it is there, just the same. In a highly unconvincing account of "The Secondary Worlds of High Fantasy" in that volume, Kenneth J. Zahorski and Robert H. Boyer pause for an instant over a 1912 story by John Buchan called "The Grove of Ashtorath": "poignant tale", according to them, "of a young Englishman named Lawson who is torn by his conflict between the bewitching but heathen rites of Ashtorath and his Christian upbringing." As it happens, I read this story in early youth, but even then it was apparent to me that Lawson was no Englishman, and probably never

had a Christian upbringing. He had a pedigree from the College of Heralds, it is true, but his face and eyes, the heavy hints of Buchan, and the evil self-mutilating response to King Solomon's ruins which he did not share with the story's narrator, made it absolutely plain that Buchan meant Lawson to be a social-climbing Jew. His "real" name (I assumed without thinking) was probably Levison.

Buchan's is an antisemitic story. It says furthermore that you have to be cruel to be kind; that Englishmen (and Scotsmen) must give a lead; from it it certainly took and admired the image of the merciless Scots Presbyterian mining engineer, the Presbyter who destroys the grove, blows up the tower, shoots every last one of the sacred pigeons, ploughs the site over and sows with salt: a "final solution" presented powerfully as fine and noble. Was John Buchan a fascist? No. But stories which slip the restraints of plausibility find it easy to carry contraband meanings, to get past the guard. Much modern fantasy luxuriates – far more than Buchan – in blood and violence, with casts of brutish heroes, passive female slaves, and evil villain-victims. Is that fascist? Casey Fredericks does at least raise the issue, but immediately drops it with a resolutely beside-the-point demonstration of how much heroic fantasy is rational, comic, wry, a tonic for depression.

But is it all? And does comedy of itself preclude contempt for the weak? Is there no such thing as an insidious fascism? Fredericks's chapter "In Defense of Heroic Fantasy" ends with the remark that "Its various fans (who are proud that their taste for it is peculiar), claim it even makes them feel good about life" (my italics). Good feelings, however, are all too notoriously no guarantee: sooner or later they will drain away. We are back to George Eliot and fatal facility once more.

It is a relief, after 400 pages of transatlantic blandness, to breathe the burning air of Colin Manlove's *The Impulse of Fantasy Literature*. It should be said, in fairness, that Dr Manlove and this reviewer have been in violent disagreement before now; but at least there is no possibility of falling to take his point, or of seeing him fudge an issue he has decided to take up. His thesis is there in the first two sentences: "Fantasy (the word is defined in a footnote), particularly in its modern form, exhibits a central and recurrent theme. This theme is its insistence on and celebration of the separate identities of created things. At the core of the genre, we are told a few lines later, is 'a delight in being'." The statement is clear enough, but one wonders immediately whether it can hold any water. "Delight in being"? We had thought that the prerogative of George Eliot and the old woman tending her flower-pot. In any case fantasy is admitted on all sides to require elements of the impossible, the false, the non-existent. What can Manlove's statement possibly mean?

Succeeding chapters, on separate authors, repeat two basic observations: that modern fantasists are (often) preoccupied with worlds, landscapes, vastitudes, and that they (sometimes simultaneously) hold strong beliefs about natural harmony. Charles Williams preached a doctrine of "co-inherence"; Ursula Le Guin's "Earthsea" runs on the principle of balance; T. H. White, in *The Last Days of Pompeii*, oscillated angrily between the poles of an ordering intelligence (in King Arthur and the rule of Right) and a sportive exuberance continually getting out of hand and showing itself indifferently in mighty feasts, castle-machicolations, games-mania and the dramatic fascist rituals of Mordred. White loved animals, loved blood sports; hated Nazis; wrote in neutral Ireland. His schizophrenia – this is not Manlove's word, and is used here only for brevity – becomes in a way a paradigm of the "impulse to fantasy". It is no accident, in Manlove's view, that so many images of evil in the fantasies he considers are of shadow or non-being. It is the almost purposeless desire to celebrate the independence and separateness of life, even at the

expense of one's self, of one's own species, and of intellectual consistency, which motivates a fair majority of modern fantasists.

From Manlove's examples it is hard to see how his view can be resisted. What one still cannot see, however, is why this impulse should lead to fantasy rather than to realism. Is it a case of a current being blocked somehow in contemporary society and having to find a release elsewhere? Manlove offers no opinion; and his work is noticeably concerned only with the impulses of writers, not readers. He remarks in fact (in his chapter on Peake) how mind and matter tend in fantasies to oppose each other, so that the details of Gormenghast co-exist with an utterly implausible and apparently unconsidered plot. But Manlove is, in a way, at the opposite pole to his authors, being fascinated by mind, system, coherence. His clear, sharp views reduce writers insistently to diagrams – circles in MacDonal's oppositions in Nesbit, webs in Charles Williams, and figure 9s in Ursula Le Guin. This is the impulse to fantasy seen almost totally from the outside. Resemblances of theme are grasped, never more firmly. Why there should be these resemblances, why people turn to fantasy, what is so delightful about separate identities and why these are not rehearseable realistically – these questions lie altogether outside Manlove's focus.

The three books above, all of which address themselves directly to the nature of fantasy, leave one with more questions than answers. There is something ominous for the future of fantasy as a "major mode" in the way that a book dedicated in super-Eliotian style to the supremacy of realism should go so much further. It may, of course, be coincidence. Certainly one

reads only a few pages of Alfred Habegger's *Gender, Fantasy and Realism in American Literature* before the realization dawns that one is facing a member of the critical First Team, and that it is time to sit in a hard chair and start taking notes. Professor Habegger's thesis is furthermore (though expressed with admirable directness) too full of particulars to paraphrase well. However, in very broad outline, it is that the whole tradition of American realism was born from a genre of fantasy, of "women's fiction"; that the two existed in an "adversary relation" to each other; and that the triumph of the former was sealed by two authors, W. D. Howells and Henry James, who can be described quite simply as "issies", or men who filled the initiation to manhood and so existed in particularly delicate symbiosis with a female genre of self-indulgence.

Already one can see that there is enough in Habegger's study for four or five books, all of them iconoclastic. The one which has most relevance to the issue of fantasy is the latent thesis about daydreaming: an activity, note, which everyone seems to indulge in, but which is almost completely taboo. Daydreams, of course, are foolish, self-centred, immodest, intellectually contemptible – and also vital. Slightly altered daydreams can keep the vitality, and the mediocrity, evade the taboo, and ruin millions of lives. Habegger clearly thinks nineteenth-century women's fiction did just that: best-seller after best-seller, written and read almost exclusively by women (no male plot here), promoted an image of woman as glorious spirit shackled to masculine beast, as saint actively seeking martyrdom, as vampire drinking the blood of her daughters from beyond the grave. Elizabeth course, be coincidence. Certainly one

Junichirō Tanizaki THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE LORD OF MUSASHI and ARROWROOT THE MAKIOKA SISTERS SOME PREFER NETTLES

"One of the two or three outstanding Japanese fiction writers of this century . . . If those coming to (him) for the first time in these three beautifully produced books begin with *The Makiooka Sisters* and then go on to *Some Prefer Nettles* and the two novellas, they will discover by stages a modern master."

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Judy Asior, Listener

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Harriett Gilbert, New Statesman
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Brian Cox, Mail on Sunday

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Graham Lord, Sunday Express
£9.95

Secker & Warburg

American notes

Christopher Hitchens

Not long ago, I took luncheon with Michael Straight, one of the last extant witnesses to what we must call the Cambridge traitors. We met in the spacious dining room of the New York University Club. This room, which was designed by Stanford White, made the perfect setting for a conversation about moles and moles. It looked like a special set created for the opening scene of a Le Carré film: with Fifth Avenue only half a block away to dispel the impression. Most Americans regard the Cambridge affair as something uniquely British: a nifty compound of port, aristocracy and sexual languor, bottled up in a hothouse academy. Can one imagine, they ask, such a thing incubating in the breezy atmosphere of a stateside campus?

As a matter of fact, some people can do better than imagine it. It has now been alleged, but not as yet widely argued, that Columbia University was the host to a whole crew of imported subversive parasites, whose personnel included actual spies as well as convinced intellectual Stalinists.

In the middle 1930s, Columbia University offered hospitality to the persecuted refugees of the Frankfurt Institut für Sozialforschung; more commonly known as the "Frankfurt School" which comprised Theodor Adorno, Karl August Wittfogel, Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse. The then President of Columbia, Nicholas Murray Butler, seems to have felt that he was honouring a tradition of hospitality by finding room for the Institute on Morningside Heights. Now Professor Lewis Feuer, who has the chair of Sociology and Government at the University of Virginia, asserts that Butler was entertaining agents unaware. His argument has two prongs. First, he accuses the Frankfurters of being culpably naïve (at best) about Stalinism. Second, he suggests that they harboured real tough guys in their midst, including the master spy Richard Sorge and the Comintern propaganda impresario Willi Muenzenberg.

It has never been disputed that the Institute's "Critical Theory" was Marxist in tone, though actual Stalinists found its output lamentably humanist and even psychoanalytical. The charge of dissembling their politics in order to facilitate the penetration of

the Americas is, however, a new one. It has the effect also of impugning the good sense, if not the good faith, of the Columbia liberals.

Sifting the evidence (which is neatly summarized in *Survey* Vol 26 No 2, in a three-sided debate between Professor Feuer, Martin Jay of Berkeley and G. L. Ullman of Columbia) one comes across several absorbing matters. First, Richard Sorge was indeed an associate of the Institute at its birth in the 1920s. He was recruited not long afterwards by Soviet intelligence and became the jewel in its Far Eastern crown. (Incidentally, Stalin never listened to his warnings of Nazi invasion.) But no direct connection can be established between the two relationships - no Blunt or Burgess has been identified as tawling Frankfurt for the Russians.

Nor, in his reply to his critics, does Feuer establish, beyond mere association, any such link. But he does come up with a most intriguing memoir from Bertram Wolfe. Wolfe wrote to Felix Weil, founder of the Institute, in 1973. His letter of reminiscence and inquiry reads, in part:

I have not seen you since the day when Horkheimer wrote in German a review of *Autorkritik und Fanatisme* and then asked me to translate it into English after which he took it "up the hill" to Thomas Mann who approved of my English and Horkheimer's German and signed the review which was then a first page review in the *New York Times Book Review*. It is an unusual event in my life to have been, if only marginally and for a moment, a ghost writer for the great Thomas Mann.

Felix Weil never ascertainably wrote back to confirm Wolfe's recollection. But it's arguable that the Frankfurt School had at least mastered the deadly art of infiltrating the strategic New York book review industry, which doesn't seem to have altered much in its preference for "big name" authors. Professor Feuer's further and better particulars (the links between Herbert Marcuse and the sinister Dr Robert Soblen; Marcuse's own later membership of American intelligence, and the mental atmosphere of fellow-travelling in general) can only be adjudicated by an impartial commission.

Smart opinion welcomed the publication of *Vanity Fair*, to the tune of a 700,000 sell-out on its first printing. Smart opinion advertised in *Vanity Fair*, to the extent of a \$1,300,000 revenue on the same edition. Smart opinion also decried *Vanity Fair* for its snobbery, its dollar-a-word extravagance and its blockbuster purchasing power. In fact, smart opinion was holding all the options on the new launch - including the prediction that Condé Nast would not long permit autonomy to a costly magazine designed to appeal to the literary and intellectual taste.

It only took two editions to vindicate smart opinion. The first number carried the entirety of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novella *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. The second encompassed a vast acreage of the memoirs of V. S. Naipaul. Neither of these authors is exactly a risky proposition in today's market, but the length was daring and agents and salesmen learned to speak with husky reverence concerning the exact sums paid over. There's a famous TV advertisement here, which depicts a roomful of people struck dumb by the mention of a leading broker's name. The Batemanesque stillness is broken by a voice-over saying, "When E. F. Hutton speaks - everybody listens." So it was with authors when *Vanity Fair* came on the line.

Anyway, the editor has been fired before the third edition could appear. There is to be a more eclectic and a more genial tone. There are to be just as many famous writers, but they are to be brief and to the point. The new editor is a *Vogue* man, and the *Vogue* principle is that attention spans are short. This may well be a shame, since *Vanity Fair* was the first product in the world to risk boring people; the only test of courage that most journalism ever undergoes. It drew attention to itself by some obviously meretricious devices, but it did try for the higher solemnity and those (like me) who laughed a bit at the attempt may now regret its translation into yet another magazine that aims chiefly to be easy on the eye.

The recent exchange between Professor Frank Kermode and Dame Helen Gardner has by no means exhausted the argument over

"deconstruction" in literary theory and literary criticism. Walter Jackson Bate, who might be called the doyen of the Harvard English school, recently attacked the followers of Jacques Derrida for advancing "a nihilistic view of literature, of human communication, and of life itself". Kermode, for his part, has rebuked those who regard deconstruction as anti-humanist, saying that the noble title has been "commandeered by people who want their cause to seem nobler than a mere disinclination to be disturbed". Elements of what is vulgarly called "polarization" are at work here, as they were in Cambridge a few years ago.

In his latest collection of essays *The World, The Text and The Critic* (336pp, Harvard University Press, £16.00, 0 674 961862 2), Professor Edward Said has an article which sets out to question this hyperbolic and possibly sterile duality. As he writes:

A deconstructionist speaking *sub specie aeternitatis* for vanguard criticism makes us feel that a challenge to Western thought itself is being portended when he or she analyses some lines by Rousseau, Freud or Pater; conversely, critics who believe themselves to be pronouncing in the name of sanity, decency and the family when they discuss the ideas of what humanism is all about denigrate even their own work unintentionally by appearing to simplify the formidable codes of academic scholarship that make intelligible what they do as scholars.

Said's anti-reductionism is very welcome in that it heads off what is becoming a fruitless "Left-Right" exchange. As he says, the "Yale School" of Harold Bloom and Paul de Man is in many respects quite conservative, while some of the deconstructionists, labelled as radical, have in fact concluded that certain texts are finally "undecidable" - not a very revolutionary position. "The question is whether... Tweedledum and Tweedledee were really all that different from each other, and whether either had produced work that justified both the oppositional rhetoric of the one or the strong moral defensiveness of the other."

Washington is commonly thought of as a prosaic city; a company town with

one theme of conversation and with only the Kennedy Centre to alleviate the monopoly of public affairs. But there is poetry to be found there, weeks, Richard Murphy has been reading his new sonnet sequence *The Price of Stone*. He's appeared at the Library of Congress and at the Cullback University, and I caught up with him at the Irish embassy on Massachusetts Avenue, where he had a varied and respectable crowd. *The Price of Stone* - some of the poems from which he is appearing in the TLS - deals largely with Murphy's engagement with an Irish country house in need of renovation. But it ranges across other Irish themes - gypsies, Nelson's pillar in Dublin - which show a strong sense of place and of the nation. In his *Wellington Testimonial*, about another Dublin memorial, for instance:

My life was work: my work was taking
To be a monument. The dead have won
Capital headlines. Look at Ireland
With maxims: need you ask what good
I've done?

This evokes some of Murphy's own British military family background, as well as the Irish strain which in his case seems to have triumphed over the Anglo one. For most of the Americans in the audience, the surprise was that a man named Murphy could look and sound so English while showing such intimacy with Ireland.

It's too good to check, but I have been very reliably told that the Political Science Department at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has accepted the manuscript of an unpublished thriller as part of a PhD thesis. If so, the possibilities of cross-cultural doctorates seem without limit. Many Boston and Cambridge academics spend much time on the shuttle to New York, and one of picture the airport bookstalls is more laden with theses that never get made it, or those that sold the rights before they were written. Examiners' meetings, too, must be expected to apply new criteria. I thought this was a good short-hand read, but it didn't hold up on a transatlantic flight - I watched the

Language Acquisition

Sir, - Can the general public, which includes countless parents, be quite so stupid in finding the way infants learn to speak not to be the "major puzzle" which P. N. Johnson-Laird insists it must be in his review of *Language Acquisition*, edited by Eric Wanner and Lila R. Gleitman (April 29)? Moved to pity for his hapless female interlocutor, unwittingly clinging to her "Augustinian behaviourism" - and you need to know your Wittgenstein sort that one out - may one draw attention to the ramshackle nature of his argument? Especially since he ends by threatening to fling a hefty (and expensive) volume from Cambridge University Press at anyone who disagrees with him in future.

If "learning to speak our native tongue" were indeed "the most difficult intellectual task that ever confronts us" two things would follow. First, the world would be populated by mute inglorious Einsteins and the like (which seems not to be the case). But also, paradoxically, no one could ever mature to intellectual distinction, since the rest of life would necessarily fall short of our finest intellectual achievement.

The truth is that the only people who find the learning of a first language problematic are not, of course, infants (who take to it like ducks to water) but academics, who have a vested interest in finding it problematic. To this end they partially agree and partially disagree on a multiplicity of hypotheses: a flawless technique which ensures that polemics, and of course publications like the one under review, will never cease. The many "leading scholars" who contribute to the volume are clearly portrayed by your reviewer as being at sixes and sevens. He even states that "any half-way sensible idea on the topic" is likely to find support.

In the charmed circle of academic linguistics, it seems, anything goes. Even, it seems, unwitting Augustinian behaviourism - the notion that infants pick up language in the way common sense would suggest - which your reviewer at once rules out of court but also states to be only a "possible exception" to the general rule. How can such judgments be reconciled?

All this may appear a harmless academic frolic. The serious matter, however, is the disproportionate amount of the academic budget which is channelled into this academic frolic and thus diverted from genuine educational purposes.

T. P. WALDRON.
Wolton College, Cambridge.

Siegfried Sassoon

Sir, - I am sorry Sir Rupert Hart-Davis (Letters, May 6) was offended by my view of his editions of Sassoon's war poems and diaries (April 22). My criticism was not "a purpose". I said his editing of the poems could have been more thorough on six counts, five of which were to do with consistency. A necessary quality in any such work. Only one, the one he misleadingly half-quotes, went beyond the bounds of his self-imposed task; I will think that variant readings would have been worth including, but if Sir Rupert regards them as "nits" he was right to leave them out.

He imputes two errors to me (hardly a "morale"). I was of course aware of the second poem to Harbord and should have mentioned it, but my remark did refer to the diaries rather than the poems. As for the date of "The Cherry Tree", it is August 1917, which I sent Sir Rupert an offprint; his book was in press by then, but in his indication that he disagreed with my findings of that he had not known of Sassoon's in the Sassoon collection at Kenwood, the poem dated October 1917, in which Sassoon assembled work for *Counter-Attack*. As far as I know, all the other poems in the notebook were

composed at various times in that year; the few 1918 poems in *Counter-Attack* are not included. The evidence is open to debate but can hardly be ignored; the fact that Sassoon copied "Together" into his diary in January 1918 proves that he was thinking of Harbord but not that he had just composed the poem. I am glad that Sir Rupert agrees at least that the poem is about Harbord.

As editor, Sir Rupert selects, dates and annotates; these are scholarly activities, to be judged by scholarly standards, and they serve the interests of "lovers of poetry". His two books will increase many people's admiration of Sassoon, as they have mine, but in some respects his editing is incomplete. A reviewer may make such a comment, I think, without meriting abuse.

DOMINIC HIBBERD.
Department of English, University of Keele, Keele, Staffordshire.

Sir, - Dominic Hibberd rightly mentions some of the editorial faults in *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon* (April 22), but he wrongly states that it contains "all the war pieces which Sassoon published". One poem which is not included is a sonnet called "News from the Front", which was published in the *Cambridge Magazine* on June 2, 1917.

NICOLAS WALTER.
88 Islington High Street, N1.

'The Hunt by Night'

Sir, - Readers of Derek Mahon's book of poems *The Hunt by Night* - a Poetry Book Club choice last year - may have noticed a two-part poem called "Brecht in Svendborg". Some will have guessed that it originated in Brecht's own work, even though it has been printed without acknowledgment or explanation. But glad as I truly am, being Brecht's English editor, to see one of our poets wishing to go on where Brecht left off, I think his approach would have been worth explaining, and this not merely out of courtesy to Brecht's own publishers and translators.

The poem is a collage of passages from six or seven of Brecht's *Svendborg Poems*, based apparently on the Methuen *Poems* but sometimes paraphrasing that volume. Are the changes of wording meant to remedy infelicities in our (sometimes my) versions? More, I think, to make the material fit into six-line stanzas with irregular pseudo-rhymes (so pseudo, in fact, that at first they mostly escape notice). Why this should be thought worth while, I am not clear, but it repeatedly seems telescoping and rearranging the original thoughts and shifting the images. As with *Das Kirschenblatt*, "The Cherry Tree" as translated by Agnes Headlam-Morley: he now picks "plums" for Mr Mahon, in order to associate with the "denims" he is made to wear.

The result is not only to change some of the facts of Brecht's life - I doubt, for instance, if he ever called his wife "Helene" - but also to distort and sometimes to revise his meaning. So in a thirty-six-line digest of "To those born later" (perhaps the greatest of all his poems) he is made to express a highly uncharacteristic wish "to love my enemies", for the sake, it seems, of an insignificant rhyme. This poem, moreover, is cut to half its length and its ending is destroyed. All mention of "those in power", rebellion, battles and class wars is filleted out.

Brecht too did his share of borrowing and doctoring, sometimes equally without acknowledgment. Much is excusable if a memorable new poem emerges. If it does so in this case it can only be for those who do not know the originals or even their translations. Anyone who wishes to judge its relation to them should look at pp 302, 303, 304, 318-20 and 352 of *Poems 1913-1956* in the Methuen edition.

JOHN WILLET.
Volta House, Windmill Hill NW3.

to the editor

'Quality and Concept'

Sir, - George Bealer (Letters, April 29) complains that I make a great fuss about the unclarity of the expression "intentional entities" when it is for him a merely umbrella term for properties, relations and propositions, terms which he thinks I use in his senses with approval. In fact I don't approve of his account of propositions as "the meanings of sentences". I take propositions to be things of which it may be said without solecism that they are true or false, and the meanings of sentences do not fill that bill (cf Strawson, "On Referring"). More importantly, it is Bealer himself who uses and makes great play with the term "intentional". His Chapter One is headed "Intentionality", his Chapter Two "Intensional Logic". These chapters constitute the bulk of Part One of his book, entitled "A Complete Foundation". He evidently thinks there is some important characteristic shared by properties, relations and propositions. The first part of my review questioned that belief by questioning what was meant by "extension". I wanted to make people think again about the "well-established conventional use" of the term "intentional entity". Clearly I failed with Bealer.

Another complaint is that I say that he holds that there are essentially only two decent theories of meaning and semantics, Frege's and Russell's, when really his theory of meaning is broadly Gricean and the views of Frege and Russell are discussed when the question at issue is what structure a formal semantics should have. But in fact Bealer incorporates both Gricean and Russellian elements in his full theory of meaning. What he calls indifferently "Russellian semantics" and "Russell's theory of meaning" isn't for him just a formal semantics but something that gives us part of the truth about meaning (including the "fido" - Fido's situation p 168, which occurs outside the section on semantics). In all these discussions Frege's and Russell's theories get far more attention than any others, and Russell is never rejected by Bealer. Wittgenstein's later philosophy of meaning is not mentioned; Ryle is not mentioned at all; Strawson's "On Referring" gets the briefest of passing mentions.

His next complaint is that I misleadingly report him as holding that propositions have "constituents". But here are his own words: "The foregoing theory [which he endorses] that the primary bearers of truth (i.e. thoughts) are built up ultimately from the primary constituents of reality" (pp 187-8). "The type of propositions that can have the property of truth are the ones known as thoughts" (p 200). I rest my case.

A fourth complaint is that I attribute to him falsely the view that mental life consists in having simple or complex ideas. On p 239 he says that there are two basic types of mental phenomena. Each "involves" being connected to ideas, in one case typically to simple ideas, in the other typically to complex ones.

A fifth complaint is that I state that he holds that propositions are "lying around in the world". As a matter of fact I did not say that he holds that propositions lie around in the world. I wrote, in the context of a discussion of the difference between properties and relations on the one hand and propositions on the other, that some properties and relations may be observed about us but that propositions in Bealer's sense, ie meanings of sentences, are not to be found lying around in the world. What Bealer does say, however, is that "propositions permeate the world" (p 187), and as we have seen, that some propositions "are built up ultimately from the primary constituents of reality", a phrase that he uses on p 189 to gloss the real things in the world.

Finally he says that he is engaged in a very difficult task, that various considerations force him to "his conclusions", and that I don't say that his theory is argued for and

don't mention any defect in his arguments or refer to recent intense research in philosophical logic. I agree that his task is difficult, and that I didn't say that his book contained arguments. I assumed that the readers of the TLS know what philosophy is. In a relatively short review, I was unable to include a "reference" to Ryle's demolition of similar theories of meaning more than thirty years ago. There was hardly space to do anything more than present Bealer's conclusions. Some readers will find them bold. For others I trusted it would be enough to state them for their wrongness to be apparent.

As I said in my review, Bealer's book contains good things. The writing is lively. His criticisms of others are, generally speaking, well worth thinking about. His formal work is impressive, and no doubt will be put to use. But his positive philosophical theories real largely on that part of his theory of meaning that he calls "Russellian" and that was demolished by Ryle.

GEOFFREY HUNTER.
Department of Philosophy,
University College of North Wales,
Bangor, Gwynedd.

'The Religion of Protestants'

Sir, - In correcting the dating of Bishop Joseph Hall's forebodings concerning the "stone coming towards our Church", words quoted in my book *The Religion of Protestants*, Nicholas Tyacke (Letters, April 29) exposes the author rather than your reviewer, Christopher Hill (March 18). It was I who misdated the passage to 1622, through dependence on a somewhat dubious if impeccably episcopal secondary source, Herbert Hensley-Henson's *Disestablishment*. As the Elizabethans were wont to say, let every fact stand on its own bottom.

Nevertheless, Nicholas Tyacke's point is very material and helpful to an argument to which Christopher Hill took exception. There seems little doubt that in the perception of Bishop Hall the "stone coming" was identified with the Arminian threat to Calvinist orthodoxy. Archbishop Laud, in effect, was the cloud the size of a man's hand which he discerned. And just as certainly it was Laud whom Hall held responsible in retrospect, when the clouds burst in 1641. However, I should not like Christopher Hill to suppose that I subscribe to a naively conspiratorial theory of history by making Laud a *diabolus ex machina* who must bear the whole weight of blame and explanation for the hurricanes of the Puritan Revolution. No doubt Laud was as much symptom as cause of a measure of dangerous instability in the post-Reformation English Church, its theology and structures.

PATRICK COLLINSON.
Keynes College, The University,
Canterbury, Kent.

'Romeo and Juliet'

Sir, - In *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 1, Scene 3, lines 52ff read:
And yet I warrant it had upon its brow
A bump as big as a young cockerell's stone.
A perilous knock, and it cried bitterly.
Both the Arden and the New Penguin editions gloss "stone" as "testicle".
Admittedly the context is bawdy and "stone" is quite frequently attested with that meaning; but a poultry expert informs me that "you would have to look hard for those particular parts of a chicken's anatomy" as they are very small. It seems unlikely that the Nurse's use of "as big as" is ironical. I suggest that what she is referring to is the gizzard, which is much larger, full of stones and very familiar to anyone who has cleaned a bird for the table.

Alternatively, it is possible that the Nurse holds the mistaken but common belief that the fatty tissue known as the "person's nose" contains the testes.
TONY HARVEY.
St Michael's School, John Felton Road, London SE16.

From the French

Sir, - The "jolly as could be" poem quoted by Gavin Ewart in his review (April 22) of *Scotch Passion*, edited by Alexander Scott, is neither a Scottish folksong nor eighteenth-century anonymous. It is translated from the French epigram by Jacques Peletier du Mans (1517-82):
Un mary fres, ancor an l'an e jour
Venant des chams, trouva sa demoyelle
Dedans un chambre apointe
... "Souperons-nous? ou ferons le deduit?"
- Faisons le quel vous plera dit la bele.
Mais le souper n'est pas encore cuit.

A shorter four-line version figures anonymously in the *Cabinet Satyrique*, 1618.

DONALD EVANS.
Les Fontaines, Coulonges les Sablons, 61110 Remelard, France.

'Hebrew is Greek'

Sir, - May I be allowed to comment briefly on James Barr's review of my book, *Hebrew is Greek* (April 22)?

1) It is not correct that homologies are merely listed, the Hebrew and the Greek words put in juxtaposition, without justification. In fact, every homology is directly or indirectly justified and explained. Thus, they are classified in phonological and morphological categories which are strictly regulated by definite theorem-like propositions, in fifty pages. Moreover, they are systematically set out, with their meanings and supporting biblical references, in 350 pages, while analysis and discussion fill 200 pages.

2) It is not correct that I am only concerned with single or isolated words. In fact, I also treat families of words and numerous phrases which constitute crucial clues to the identity of the two languages.

3) It is not correct that I have no code. In fact, I have a complete code, disciplined and controlled by reliable tests of accuracy, to which a chapter is devoted. One of them is "context", and it is by this test that Professor Barr's hypothetical homology, *Idra*, fails.

4) It is not correct that my theory results in comparatively little semantic change. In fact, the obscure words and puzzling passages clarified are both numerous and important. Hitherto biblical interpretation has been tossed about at the mercy of whims, hunches and false comparisons; now it is moored to Greek.

5) Professor Barr does not comment on the grammatical aspect of my research, to which a chapter is devoted. Nor does he touch on the Arable involvement, although there are three specific propositions about it, and upwards of 700 Greco-Arabic homologies. I therefore beg earnestly of students of the Bible not to be put off by Professor Barr's assessment, and invite them to find out for themselves whether in fact my book is merely learned-looking.

JOSEPH YAHUDA.
3 Hate Court, Temple ECK.

Reviving Yiddish

Sir, - S. S. Prager's impassioned plea for a revival of Yiddish (April 29), the Nobel Laureate Singer notwithstanding, is likely to fall on deaf ears. Whatever its virtues - and most of these are in the area of the homely, the homespun, the bawdy - Yiddish is the language of the ghetto of the oppression from which Russian and Polish Jews fled in their hundreds of thousands. They have deliberately not passed it on to their children and it has, quite rightly, been ousted by Hebrew, the true, and nobler, tongue of the descendants of the Children of Israel.

STEPHEN CORRIN.

10 Russell Gardens, NW11.
The second paragraph of John Strathclyde's letter in last week's issue should have opened with the words: "In December 1982 I wrote to Strathclyde..." We apologize for the typographical error that led to their omission.

Among this week's contributors

MARK ABLEY was the winner of a 1981 Eric Gregory Award.

PEARL K. BELL was until recently a regular reviewer of fiction for *Commentary*.

JOHN W. BOWKER is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Lancaster.

HUGH BROGAN's books include *The Times Reports The American Civil War*, 1975.

HUMPHREY CARPENTER's *The Inklings* was published in 1978.

JAMES CLIFFORD is the author of *Paradise and Myth: Maurice Leenhardt in the Melanesian World*, 1981.

D. G. COLEMAN is Reader in French Literature at the University of Cambridge. Her books include *An Illustrated Companion: Maurice Scève's 'de la'*, 1981.

W. J. FISMAN is Barnett Shine Senior Research Fellow and Tutor in Labour Studies at Queen Mary College, London.

JOHN A. C. GREPPIN is the editor of the *Journal of Armenian Linguistics*.

ALETHA HAYES's books include *Fitzgerald to His Friends: Selected Letters of Edward Fitzgerald*, 1979.

PETER HEBBLETHWAITE's most recent book, *Introducing John Paul II, the Populist Pope*, was published last year.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS is Washington correspondent for *The Nation*.

MICHAEL HOLROYD is the editor of *The Genius of Shaw*, 1979.

J. L. HOULDEN is a lecturer in New Testament Studies at King's College London.

GABRIEL JOSIFOVIC's *Writing and the Body* was published last year.

A. J. KRAISHMEIER's books include *Conversion*, 1980.

ANNETTE LAVERS's *Roland Barthes, Structuralism and After* was published in 1981.

ALAN MACAN LASE is the author of *The Origins of English Individualism*, 1979.

BRIAN MARTIN's books include *John Henry Newman: His life and work*, 1982.

KENNETH MINOQUE is the author of *Nationalism*, 1967, and *The Concept of a University*, 1973.

DAVID NOKES is a lecturer in English at King's College, London.

PAUL PRESTON's *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War* will be published in a revised edition later this year.

LEONARD SCHAPIRO is co-editor with Joseph Goshop of *The Soviet Worker: Illusions and Realities*, 1982.

ROGER SCOTON's books include *The Politics of Culture*, 1981, and *Karl*, 1982.

T. A. SHIFFRY is Professor of English Language at the University of Leeds.

His *The Road to Middle-earth* was published last year.

JOHN STOKES's *Oscar Wilde* was published in 1978. He is a lecturer in English at the University of Warwick.

R. L. STOREY is Professor of English History at the University of Nottingham, and author of *The Reign of Henry VII*, 1968.

STUART SUTHERLAND is Professor of Experimental Psychology at the University of Sussex.

GEZA VERMES's *Jesus and the World of Judaism* will be published later this year.

STEVEN WALL is a Fellow of Keele College, Oxford, and editor of *Essays in Criticism*.

GEOFFREY WHEATCROFT was literary editor of *The Spectator* from 1977 to 1981. He is at present completing a book on the "Randlords", the South African mining magnates.

ANNE WHITMARSH is the author of *Simone de Beauvoir and the Limits of Commitment*, 1981.

RICHARD WOLLHEIM's *Art and Its Objects* was republished in 1980.

BETTY WOOD is a Fellow of Girton College, Cambridge.

ADRIAN WOOLDRIDGE is a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.

BLAIR WORDSWORTH is the editor of *Edmund Ludlow's A Voice from the Whirl*, 1978.

Competition No 122
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than June 3. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct - in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 122" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on June 10.

1. "Bliss, she leaned towards him, expecting a kiss, but he only patted her hair and said:

"These silly chignons! Instead of stroking my child's hair, I stroke the hair of some departed old women."

2. "Pretty child! Your dress is sadly

The fighting and the writing

Geoffrey Wheatcroft

Writing in 1960, the historian H. S. Ferns observed that "The dispute between Britain and Argentina concerning what one calls the Falkland Islands and the other Las Islas Malvinas is now more than a century and a quarter old. The antiquity of the dispute is one of its illuminating peculiarities. It is neither important enough to solve nor unimportant enough to forget. For another twenty years it remained too unimportant to solve: this was the decision of successive British governments. Since the Argentine would never in any circumstances renounce its claim, the only diplomatic "solution" available was cession by Great Britain. This was contemplated and was in effect the Foreign Office's policy, but to carry it out was politically impossible.

The dispute none the less remained too important for the Argentines to forget. Just over a year ago they attempted another kind of "solution" by *coup de main*. The consequences were dramatic, moving, shocking, strange, hard to grasp in retrospect even now. It is easy enough to tell the story of the war that ensued, though some of the books under review do that better than others. What is surprisingly difficult is to recapture the feelings of what it was like to live through that nightmare adventure, and to recall accurately the substance and the tone of the arguments for and against the war which were held at the time.

That they were not new or unprecedented arguments was shown by one of the minor consequences of the conflict, the recollection (or discovery) that there had been another Falklands crisis more than two hundred years earlier, a crisis which was given particular interest when the greatest writer of the age wrote a pamphlet on it. The parallels between the two are eerie but incomplete: history did not repeat itself first as tragedy then as farce; if anything it was the other way round.

In 1770 a flotilla from Buenos Aires seized West Falkland where a British colony had been established for five years. The British government threatened force but did not have to use it. In the event France abandoned her Spanish ally. (A comparison might be sought here with the American support which the Argentines vaguely hoped for but did not get last April. A closer parallel with the relations between France and Spain in 1770-71 would be those between the United States and Great Britain at the time of Suez. The Spanish government chose the better part of valour and disowned its adventurous proconsul the Viceroy of the Plate - whose succession state the Argentine Republic in effect is - and the island was returned to the British, though without prejudice to formal claims of sovereignty.

That crisis of 1770-71 is where the question of who rightfully owns the Falklands must start. Several writers who have looked into the matter have been disconcerted to find, following the American scholar Julius Goebel (whose *The Struggle for the Falkland Islands*, first published in 1927, was reissued last year and reviewed in the TLS on July 2), that the British title in international law is not a particularly good one. But really the question is far too convoluted and technical to command general interest.

In terms of British domestic politics the earlier crisis differed fundamentally from last year's. The party of peace was Lord North's ministry itself, which wanted to avoid war if possible. The bellicose "patriots" - Jingoists in later parlance - of the opposition wanted war at any price, for its own sake. It was to discomfit them and to justify his own policy that North hired Samuel Johnson to write his "Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands". The dealings between the two were shown in coarsened and garbled form in Don Shaw's recent BBC TV programme, which at least brought the "Thoughts" to the attention of a wider audience. That was good since they remain, not surprisingly, the best thing ever written about the Falklands. The pity is that a year ago the pamphlet was more often alluded to than read.

For in spite of the dissimilar circumstances, the questions which Johnson addressed himself to are much the same as divided public and private debate last year. Who justly owned the Falklands? How had the crisis erupted and where did the blame for it lie? How should aggression be punished? Should England go to war? What was the price of sovereignty, of national honour, of international order? Johnson was a willing hack. That is, he wrote from the heart on the horrors of war, as a man for whom peace with compromise, even indignity, was better than death and destruction. Just as *The Idler* No 81 is one of the best "anti-colonial" tracts ever written, so the "Thoughts" rank very high among "anti-war" literature.

A pacific line was easy for Johnson to take because he did not think the islands were worth having; certainly not worth fighting for, not indeed even worth winning. Beyond this, what have we acquired? What but a bleak and gloomy solitude, an island thrown aside from human use, stormy in winter, and barren in summer, an island which not the southern savages have dignified with habitation. But more generally the "Thoughts" are a great text for pacifists, in the old sense of the word: not modern "pacifists" but those who favour a peaceful solution wherever it can be found, negotiation rather than confrontation. It was a tradition which ran from Johnson to Cobden and Bright during the Crimean War, and to the pro-Boers, but then dwindled out. The events of this century gave "appeasement" a bad name - although the word was still used in the 1930s in the first place by those who advocated it. A dread of appeasement played a significant part in the Suez, Vietnam and Falklands conflicts. Those who wanted to be pacifist had lost the thread of their argument. To know how to advocate appeasement, they could have done much worse than to turn to Johnson.

What was published about the earlier crisis was both better written - by Johnson and by his foe Junius also - and shorter than what last year's events have brought forth. On top of an exhaustive and exhausting press coverage there has been a flood of books: campaign histories telling how the war was fought, analyses of its causes and effects, and polemics which draw one lesson or another. The campaign histories were the first to come, but no better for that reason. One instant history was so instant that it was published before the first British troops went ashore. As someone has said, never in the field of human conflict has so much been written by so many so quickly. Most of the reporters for national newspapers, television and radio who sailed with the Task Force have produced books of some sort and a word of thanks is in order for those who did not.

One of the two books which attempt the full story is *The Falklands War*, with three main writers, eight principal correspondents, two researchers and ten additional reporters credited. It is not quite a case of too many cooks, but the book has the defects of fact-packed breathlessness without reflection, the attempt to fill a large canvas with detail, the belief that the bigger the book, the better. The result will be: the most valuable individual contribution from Isabel Hilton, who had the best command of British correspondents in Buenos Aires.

One of the better campaign books, *EyeWitness Falklands*, has the contrary merit that Robert Fox of the BBC does not try to tell the whole story but confines himself to what he saw himself. So, to a large extent, do Patrick Bishop of the *Observer* and John Withrow of the *Times*. The interest of their *The Winter War* is to see how two men far too young to have known national service reacted to the military life. Like others, they were struck first by the toughness of the troops. "Many of the Toms," as the pair of officers called their men with a mixture of affection and contempt, enjoyed their life as emotional, efficient killers, one step away from

being psychopaths" (the Toms' favourite film on board the Canberra was *The Deer Hunter*) - and then by their comradeship, humour and tenderness to comrades in battle.

The reporters are taken to task for this by Anthony Barnett in *Iron Britannia*, who complains that if journalists spent more time away from their own "well paid, intensely competitive and fashionably cynical world" they might be less surprised when they come across working-class loyalty and bravery. Barnett has half a point there: but he almost falls into the opposite trap of sentimentalizing the British working class - every people and every class produce decency and heroism, sometimes - and he overlooks the significant fact that the Toms and Booties (Marines) are by no means a typical cross-section of the working class. Now, again, as in the last century, British soldiers come from the roughest end of the proletariat, and are moulded by training and *esprit de corps* into something else.

Two reporters, Robert McGowan and Jeremy Hands, have tried to capture the actuality of "the sharp end" in *Don't Cry For Me, Sergeant-Major* but it takes more to make an interesting book than recording the way soldiers talk. There are blood and tears, there is much anal humour and obscenity, there is a lot of dialogue, some of it convincing, but the general effect is thin. So far there is nothing from the British side as good as *Los Chicos de la guerra*, a collection of interviews with Argentine soldiers back from the Malvinas, eloquently resentful of their officers and speaking with the bitterness of defeat. This is the voice of a conscript army, the kind which Great Britain no longer has. Nor so far have we heard the voice of the officers, with the remarkable exception of David Tinker's *A Message from the Falklands* (reviewed in the TLS by John Keegan on November 12). Maybe there will be more books like Tinker's, proving again the old truth, so well known from Great War memoirs, that men in the front line are rarely fire-eaters compared with those at home.

To say that *The Battle for the Falklands* is the best of the campaign books would be poor praise. It is a good book in its own right, effectively combining the military and political stories. Max Hastings had the best war of the press correspondents with the Task Force, in large part because, as he says himself with more accuracy than sometimes factual story told in *Goathead*, Relations between the "media", press and broadcasting, and the government are never likely to be easy in wartime. Robert Harris explains why in this war they were so often so bad. Even when the obvious conflict of interest between services and reporters had been frankly recognized there were tensions. Soldiers and sailors now have a set view not only that war correspondents, photographers and cameramen got in the way - that has long been known - but that they have an actively harmful effect. As the army jingle went,

Waterloo was won upon the playing fields of Eton.

The next war will be photographed - and lost - by Cecil Benton.

Hence the long delays in sending back television footage, as well as the extremely incompetent censorship of written copy by the "minders" with the Task Force. The end result was that, as Harris says, "One of the features of the so-called 'information war' was that everyone fought everyone else: Whitehall fought the Navy, the Government fought Whitehall, all

three fought the media and the media... fought amongst themselves." The services' agencies Harris reminds us, there is no evidence that the Americans "lost Vietnam" because of television coverage.

He is also reporter to the reporters, telling the tale of the huck's campaign: a fascinating story and sometimes very funny. A former editor of the *New Statesman* is supposed to have said once that "Scoop is not only a bad novel but a slur on our profession." Anyone who doubts that *Scoop* is not only a good novel but a work of social realism should read *Goathead*. The point comes on Victory Day when the press corps has reached its ultimate, beckoning destination, the Upland Goose pub in Port Stanley. A Glaswegian reporter conceived the idea that Max Hastings had deliberately lost his copy which had been entrusted to Hastings in transmission. "Max was sitting by the piano, when Bruce started yelling at him in a loud Glaswegian accent, 'What the hell are you doing? You've lost my story! I am going to kill you', and then pulled out an Argentinean bayonet. Patrick Bishop's face was one of studied amusement as to where Bruce Hudson piped up and said, 'This is neither the time nor the place to murder Max Hastings, and Bruce was dragged off him. Poor Max was my white'."

What happened in the Upland Goose was nothing compared with what happened in Fleet Street. A sombre part of Mr Harris's book describes the ferocious battles between the newspapers. In the end it was the *Guardian* which had the last word. The *Guardian* had little effect on the Falklands but it had its effect on British journalism all the same. One of the nastiest things about the *Guardian*, A. J. P. Taylor once wrote, was that "he gave the cheap press its first dose of circulation." But it had its effect on the Falklands with self-respect, even pride. But the indescribable *Guardian* (whose headline after the sinking of the Belgrano gives *Goathead* its title) is impossible for any journalist to contemplate without shame. It is a shame to share the feelings of a naval officer who asked his superior why he had to transmit signals given to him by the *Sun*'s "reporters". The *Page Three* Girls are going to war. Fifty white pin-up pictures, each one 2 foot by 1 inch, were airlifted to the Task Force and are now on their way to the Falkland Islands.

In *The Battle for the Falklands* it is that Simon Jenkins had the task in dealing with the political and diplomatic story. Hastings described how the war was fought; Jenkins tells why it was fought. The story explains why it is that the Argentine government seized the islands. The British government responded with force and that negotiations failed to avert a violent climax. To give what they may have been, ferociously successful war leaders. Just how close-run the campaign would prove to be no one could foresee in April and early May - the sinking of the Sheffield on May 4 gave the first sign - but it was entirely obvious that a combined operation 8,000 miles from home and within range of shore-based aircraft was hazardous and risky in the extreme. Mrs Thatcher knew that. She knew that a successful campaign would enhance her and her government's popularity but that an unsuccessful one would drive her from office with greater ignominy than any prime minister since Lord North, a decade after his Falklands crisis, the American war was lost. She would have accepted a compromise if one had been available and acceptable.

Which brings us to the Belgrano, and a reviewer sympathetic to Dalrymple, admitted, "the peace plan would have been then the most consistent war of any prime minister since Lord North." From the flames of the Falklands, the military response, believing in the justice of the Argentine cause, the American war was lost. She would have accepted a compromise if one had been available and acceptable.

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What happened thereafter is another matter. As Jenkins shows, the Task Force was the product of Mrs Thatcher, of Sir Henry Leach (described in an uncharacteristically nodding moment as "very much an admiral's admiral") and of the Commons. Mrs Thatcher was convinced towards the end of that fateful week that if there was no military response then her government would fall; Sir Henry saw a perfect opportunity to reverse the run-down of the Navy (which is described, and condemned, in *Sea Change* by Keith Speed, who was dismissed as a junior Defence Minister a year before the Falklands for opposing the cuts). This revelation, if such it be, has caused some sour comment but is really not very startling. After all, it would be an odd prime minister who wanted to see her government fall, or First Sea Lord who wanted to see the Navy dwindle away.

The Task Force was assembled by a miraculous feat of improvisation and sailed with the fervent urgings of the Commons. That lamentable debate on April 3 is grist to the mill of any opponent of the war such as Mr Barnett, who analyses in gruesome detail every speech made that day. For all the hysteria of that debate - there can be no MP left except perhaps for Mr Alan Clark who does not look back on it with embarrassment - the government was in a real quandary. Having failed to prevent the Argentine invasion, Mrs Thatcher responded to it vigorously; even those who deplored that response can see the logic in it. It is quite possible to hold or to have held at the same time the views that the Falklands should have been given away years ago, and that the armed aggression should be resisted. But the response created its own momentum.

Once the fleet was steaming south, negotiations could take place but they were inherently unlikely to succeed. This point is made with unconscious force by Simon Jenkins when he writes, "If [Haig] could postpone the sovereignty issue for the time being, his only task was to find a formula for an Argentine withdrawal which did not look like a surrender, and for a British return which did not look as if Buenos Aires had profited by aggression." There was no such formula. The tragedy of the original Argentine action was that it made impossible any compromise on the British side which did not look like a victory for aggression. In fact, the British government continued to negotiate throughout April and May and on terms which belie the charges of prevarication or sanguinary eagerness for war.

Mrs Thatcher was certainly the most enthusiastic guerrilla in the Cabinet, a contrast to her Military Cross-holding Foreign and Home Secretaries, Messrs Fynn and Whitelaw. (Emancipation meant that women can become heads of government in democratic countries. The first three to have done so, Mrs Meir, Mrs Gandhi and Mrs Thatcher, have all been, whatever else they may have been, ferociously successful war leaders.) Just how close-run the campaign would prove to be no one could foresee in April and early May - the sinking of the Sheffield on May 4 gave the first sign - but it was entirely obvious that a combined operation 8,000 miles from home and within range of shore-based aircraft was hazardous and risky in the extreme. Mrs Thatcher knew that. She knew that a successful campaign would enhance her and her government's popularity but that an unsuccessful one would drive her from office with greater ignominy than any prime minister since Lord North, a decade after his Falklands crisis, the American war was lost. She would have accepted a compromise if one had been available and acceptable.

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Georgia. Far from the invasion of April 2 having been unforeseeable and ineluctable, it was extremely easy to foresee and could have been averted either by plausible conciliation or by plausible threats.

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"Motor Torpedo Boat", Montague Dawson's romantic view of air and sea power in the 1930s, is one of the items included in the sale of British Impressionist and Post-Impressionist and Modern Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture to be held at Sotheby's New Bond Street galleries on Wednesday, May 25, at 11 am.

fellow-traveller's zeal (as well as with defective syntax): "Far from being the classic developing country, I was told that Argentina derived 37 per cent of her gross national product from industry." I was struck by the sophistication of their industry. As an MP whose main interest is in science and technology, I recognized at once the high quality of much of the work being done. No doubt the trains ran on time also. He even makes the claim to bring a blue to any Peronist cheek that "during World War II, many Argentines helped the British war effort."

At the time of the conflict and even more after it Dalrymple developed into a parliamentary monomaniac of a high order. Not a week passes without a parliamentary question on the Falklands from him. Scarcely a day indeed: he has asked more than 300 questions in a year. His devotion to the cause is worthy of respect, even of admiration. But his monomania leads him into gross error. He cannot simply condemn the war on moral grounds. With his, quite common, cast of mind, he has to look for darker secrets. He has always to say in effect, "c'est pire qu'on crime, c'est une conspiration". Not content with merely saying that the sinking of the Belgrano was a ruthless and bloodthirsty act - a verdict with which it would be hard to argue - he goes on to believe that it was part of some deeper plot, in this case a deliberate spearhead thrown by Mrs Thatcher in the works of the negotiations.

This flies in the face of all the evidence, which is that the Navy wanted to sink the Belgrano, inside or outside the total exclusion zone, and that this desire was relayed, amplified by Northwood, to 10 Downing Street. (There is one small, technical revelation which could have exploded near the Belgrano to cripple but not sink her. But the Navy doubted the reliability of the Tigerfish and instead a torpedo of prewar design was used. The doubts were justified: as told in *Sea Change*, the first attempt to sink the hulk of the Galahad was made with a Tigerfish - which failed to explode.)

In any case, as Neal Ascherson, a reviewer sympathetic to Dalrymple, admitted, "the peace plan would have been then the most consistent war of any prime minister since Lord North." From the flames of the Falklands, the military response, believing in the justice of the Argentine cause, the American war was lost. She would have accepted a compromise if one had been available and acceptable.

of Diego Garcia ever notably paramount. In other words, one small group of citizens is not normally allowed to dictate national policy. And it is bitterly ironic to be reminded by whom and when the doctrine that "no transfer can be made against the wishes of the islanders" was formulated: Mr Michael Stewart (as he then was) in 1968, at the very time when he was master-minding - if that is the word in this case - the coercion of the Biafrans into a Nigerian Federal state to which they did not wish to belong.

The Government is not - no government has ever been - frightened by 1,800 kelpers, who have not in any case shown much initiative in looking after themselves. (Major Ewan Southby-Taylor of the Royal Marines, who had learnt the Islands coastline backwards as a yachtsman before taking part in their reconquest, once "affectionately" described the islanders as "a drunken, decadent, immoral and indolent collection of drop-outs".) What terrifies front benches, as Mr Ridley discovered in 1980, is backbenchers: the vociferous group of honorary Falklanders on both sides of the House who scared successive administrations away from any compromise with Buenos Aires.

"Sovereignty" excited a good many Conservatives, and Barnett quotes with derision Enoch Powell's mystical lucubrations on the subject. But it can fairly be said that sovereignty is not going to do the Falklanders much good in practice. Or to put it another way, the rational thing would be to accommodate abstract sovereignty to the preservation of way of life. Or to put it another way, the rational thing would be to accommodate abstract sovereignty to the preservation of way of life. Or to put it another way, the rational thing would be to accommodate abstract sovereignty to the preservation of way of life.

Barnett ends by reviewing - on the whole to refute the arguments advanced in favour of Britain's South Atlantic war. As we have said, the original legal, constitutional dispute is at once complex and sterile. The most cogent verdict on the subject was Burke's in 1777: "The claims on either side are so equivocal and uncertain as to afford room for endless discussion, while the question of moral or legal right may be for ever unsettled."

The principle of self-determination was much to the fore but as always it was an ambiguous principle, and often in conflict with the principles of international order and morality advanced at the same time (in 1938 Hitler was appeased, and Czechoslovakia dismembered, in the name of self-determination for the Bohemian Germans). Nor is it difficult to show up the humbug of successive British governments. The notion that "the wishes of the islanders should be paramount" is nonsense, self-determination gone mad. It is not applied in other contexts. We do not say: the wishes of the people of Little Gidding shall be paramount - on the contrary, when it comes to driving a motorway through their pastures, the wishes of the villagers are unforgotten. Nor, to take an obvious example, were the wishes of the people

cynic to agree, one lesson of the Falklands is that "aggression pays." In the end, Britain proved to be much more aggressive. Superior might triumphed. In future irreverent powers will remember not to drop their claims, but to make sure they can secure them by necessary force.

But beyond this, what have we acquired? The economic consequences of the war - the practical consequences in general - are sombre. The figure of £1 million per islander (at least) which the campaign cost is not the less valid for often having been quoted. The Government is now encumbered with a Fortress Falklands "where a garrison must be kept in a state that contemplates with envy the exiles of Siberia, of which the expense must be perpetual and the use only occasional" - something of which Mrs Thatcher did not need Johnson to remind her since, in her speech on April 3 defending her government's conduct, she incautiously admitted why a permanent garrison had not previously been kept on the Falklands: "The cost would be enormous... no government could have done that." These like Mr Speed who welcomed the Falklands war as a way to reverse the decline of the Royal Navy have drunk a poisoned chalice with victory. "On the naval side," he writes, "there must be at least one or more nuclear or conventional submarines in the area." For how long? At what cost to Nato?

Max Hastings quotes a soldier saying of the Falklands, "If they're worth dying for they've got to be worth keeping." But only now do the implications of keeping them become clear, and Hastings himself, writing in the *Standard* last month, sang an audibly different tune: "Nobody, least of all the Falkland Islanders themselves, believes that Britain can continue to defend them with a full task force in perpetuity."

Those who supported the war ask what the consequences for England and the world would have been if Mrs Thatcher's government had given in to illegality, had appeased the aggressors, questions which of their nature cannot be answered. Those who opposed the war have their own questions, which will become more and more insistent with time. A brilliant and daring campaign, whose record will always be stirring, was fought, no reconquer, a bleak and barren spot in the Magellanic ocean of which no use could be made unless it were a place of exile for the hypocrites of patriotism. It would be good if the world were, in some measure, a better place for last year's war; that is an imponderable. What seems more likely is that the British people and government may yet find themselves saying with Johnson, "May my country never be cursed with such another conquest."

The argument between guerrillas and pacifists can end only in stalemate: each side has almost unanswerable questions to ask of the other. Those who were of the party of war are entitled to ask, should we really have left the Islands and islanders to their fate? Was it not in the end, for all the horrors of war, despite all the risks, a magnificent and thrilling exploit, "boldly planned, bravely executed and brilliantly accomplished" in Mrs Thatcher's words? And was its success not a victory for honour, decency and justice? Does not the world feel a better place since the wrongdoers were successfully punished? Is it not good that aggression and force have been shown not to pay? All these are fair questions. But the last is once more ambiguous and it leads on to the pacifist case. As Mr Calvert observes in *The Falkland Crisis*, and one doesn't have to be a

PAUL EDDY, MAGNUS LINKLATER and PETER GILLMAN with the Sunday Times Insight Team
The Falklands War
274pp. André Deutsch. £8.95 (paperback, £2.50). 0233975152

ROBERT FOX
EyeWitness Falklands
192pp. Methuen, £1.95. 0413523004

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Sea Combat off the Falklands
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KEITH SPEED
Sea Change: The Battle for the Falklands and the Future of Britain's Navy
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ROBERT HARRIS
Goathead: The Media, the Government and the Falklands Crisis
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TAM DALRYMPLE
One Man's Falklands
144pp. Cecil Woolf. £5.50 (paperback, £1.95). 090821655

PETER CALVERT
The Falklands Crisis: The Rights and the Wrongs
183pp. Frances Pinter. £9.50. 086187272X

Memo

It is impossible and needless to rehearse The economic circumstances which doubtless would have justified virtually everything - Of the political considerations which surely would account for whatever was "virtually" left.

As the attached report may suggest, for some there are not exactly "four doors to escape by" (Nor will the source of those words escape you). One alone, as it might be, to be caught by. Leave "justice" aside; just ask, is it needful?

One hardly looks for universal love or luxury. So many having died of late, this way or that. A degree of "restraint" should not be impossible. Yet the circumstances and considerations persist. Do they possess a life of their own? Please check.

D. J. Enright

Intelligence minus brains

Stuart Sutherland

NEIL FRUDE

The Intimate Machine: Close Encounters with the new computers 190pp. Century Publishing. £9.95 (paperback, £4.95). 0 712 60070

ADRIAN BERRY

The Super-Intelligent Machine: An Electronic Odyssey 182pp. Cape. £7.95. 0 224 01967 8

In 1960 Herbert Simon, one of the founders of Artificial Intelligence (the study of how to make computers perform intelligent tasks) proclaimed that within a decade "computers would have the problem solving and information handling capacity of the brain". Despite the impressive achievements of the subject since then, most workers in it have by now learned to be more cautious about its future. This caution is not reflected by writers of popular books on AI, of whom Neil Frude, a social psychologist, and Adrian Berry, a journalist, are not atypical. Both their books are misleading and Frude's is pernicious, so it is worth examining where they go wrong.

Their early chapters are rather similar, and provide an elementary and inadequate account of the development of computers and programming languages, as well as of some of the intelligent tasks that computers can perform. Although Frude is more detailed, neither he nor Berry explains how it is possible to develop high-level languages which the computer itself translates back into machine code or why such languages are necessary. In fact, it would be virtually impossible to write complex programs in machine code since the programmer would have to specify all the operations needed to execute any instruction that was not part of the machine language. For example, calculating the square root of a number or finding the head of a list of items, and he would have to manage for himself the allocation of storage space within the machine. Most human thinking depends on the invention of higher-level concepts and a high-level programming language provides the programmer both with a ready-made set of high-level operations that he can use without worrying about the details of how they are implemented, and with the opportunity to invent and name other such operations not already incorporated in the language. Without these facilities, writing a complex program would be an impossibly difficult task. Indeed, progress in Artificial Intelligence has largely depended on the provision of increasingly sophisticated programming languages, as well as of more efficient "editors" and "operating systems", neither of which are mentioned by Frude or by Berry.

Both authors go on to describe a number of seemingly intelligent programs, but neither gives the reader any insight into how they work nor do they consider their limitations in sufficient detail. Instead they cite examples of the output from different programs, often in the form of a dialogue between the user and the program. These examples almost invariably represent the program working at its best and can be very misleading. There are programs that simulate psychotherapy, that make what appears to be intelligent comments on an input story, that write stories of a sort, and that simulate paranoia. But none of these programs achieves anything remotely approaching human understanding, and most perform by a series of tricks. Thus, a psychotherapy program may pick out from an input sentence one of a limited number of key words and ask a question about it. For example, if the patient uses the phrase "my mother", the program may give the preset response "Did you like your mother?" None of the programs has powers of inference that resemble those of a person and all are limited to a narrow range of discourse. Moreover, both authors grossly exaggerate the likelihood of there being highly

intelligent programs in widespread use in the foreseeable future, and although they give no arguments to suggest they are right, it is worth examining why they are wrong.

Very few programs that exhibit even a simulacrum of understanding have in fact been written and each of them is confined to a very limited domain. It is striking that the most impressive programs on understanding natural language were written twelve years ago. Although its understanding was restricted to the domain of a mini-world of blocks of different shapes, it has not yet been surpassed. No one has any idea how to incorporate into a program the knowledge of a four-year-old child or how to retrieve from such a huge data-base the knowledge needed for a particular task. Indeed, perhaps the main lesson to be drawn from work in Artificial Intelligence is that the human mind is even more intricate and hard to simulate than might have been supposed. The difficulty of providing a computer program with a wide range of general knowledge means that for many years to come the most useful programs will almost certainly be specialist programs, known as "expert systems", which operate within what are, by human standards, very narrow domains, such as chess, medical diagnosis, the derivation of molecular structure from X-ray diffraction patterns, and other similarly restricted problems. Several programs of this type perform impressively and may indeed do better than people, particularly when all the factors bearing upon the solution to the problem are known and when a numerical weighting of the importance of each factor or combination of factors can be provided. This is hardly surprising since it has been known for a long time that people are poor at weighing and combining probabilities and that the clinician's intuitions are often less accurate than a diagnosis based on a statistical analysis of the most likely cause of the symptoms presented.

There is a second and perhaps more important reason for caution in predicting the future intelligence of computers. It is only possible to program a computer to execute a given task if we already have a rigorous and explicit understanding of that task and of possible mechanisms for executing it. It is obvious that at present we possess such an understanding for very

little of human intellectual activity. For example, we understand explicitly the steps by which a mathematical proof may be reached, and – for elementary mathematics – some of the mechanisms for providing the right steps if a computer (or person) is given a theorem and instructed to prove it. But we do not understand how a mathematician selects a new theorem to prove on the intuition that it is both provable and worth proving (that is, its proof will have important consequences). If we cannot at present write programs to make computers cope with the purely formal discipline of mathematics, there seems little chance of writing ones that simulate or understand human emotion, since our own understanding of emotions is almost wholly intuitive and unformalized. Again, nobody could start writing a program to simulate a speaker, for the simple reason that we have not yet elucidated even the syntactic rules that govern language, let alone its semantics.

In the latter parts of their books, the authors diverge. In *The Super-Intelligent Machine* Berry threatens his readers with machines that will defend themselves against attack, but he forgets that computers will only have goals that are programmed into them and that even people are unlikely to be so foolish as to program the goal of self-preservation at the expense of mankind. However, intelligent computers were, such a goal could only be incorporated by design, except in a science-fiction world where computers evolved by random mutation, with the fittest surviving.

In *The Intimate Machine*, Frude takes a different tack. His main thesis is that people will tend to treat computers more and more animistically. There has always been a tendency to treat inanimate objects as people, as witness the traditional attitude of yachtsmen to their boats. Frude argues that because it is possible to communicate (in a loose sense) with a computer, attitudes to computers are likely to be more animistic than towards most other objects. Improvements in the existing capacity of computers to perceive and utter speech will greatly enhance animism towards them, and such animism would be further strengthened if it became possible to provide computers with the sort of wide-

ranging intelligence that man has. Frude himself appears to think that it would be desirable to foster animism towards computers and he argues that manufacturers are likely to attempt to do so because it would make their machines more appealing. According to him animism in the classroom is already encouraged by adding faces and limbs to the machine. He suggests that doll makers will shortly be employed to disguise computers' metal shells and flashing lights, for which they will substitute a model of a face whose artificial muscles will move to simulate appropriate emotions. In order to "personalise" them further, machines will be given individual voices, and their own foibles and idiosyncrasies, including a sense of humour. Frude does have the grace to admit that it will be easier to get a machine to laugh than to make it laugh at a joke.

His remaining suggestions, though he seems serious enough, belong to the realm of science fiction. Each machine will have a unique personality provided by "a character program", it will be identifiable male or female (men in general interrupt in conversation more than women) and so on. He suggests that machines will soon be able to form an impression of their user's character and base their own behaviour on it. For the reasons advanced earlier, there is in my opinion, no possibility that this sort of machine can be designed in the foreseeable future.

In his final chapter, Frude weighs the advantages and disadvantages of the existence of a large number of humanoid computers, blithely assuming that the problem of making these machines more intelligent will shortly be solved and that almost everyone will have his own personal and personalized computer. Some of the advantages, for example, easier access to information in medicine and other subjects, are already with us; others, like improved prostheses for the disabled and devices for the deaf to transform speech into words on a visual display, are not far away. But most of Frude's suggestions – such as the use of computers to bring solace to the lonely by their engaging chatter, to replace judges, or to act as salesmen or as "family therapists", keeping a watchful eye on discord and intervening in their wisdom to reduce it, not to mention their use in "leisure-counselling,

psychotherapeutic and religious roles" – will not come to pass for a very long time, if ever. Such programs, even from needing a formalized knowledge of human nature with which we cannot provide them, would require an enormous data-base, and as already indicated we do not know how to implement in a program knowledge over a wide variety of fields. Moreover, relying on advice from such programs is likely to be extremely dangerous. Existing large programs are constructed by several different programmers and they are often patched up in an *ad hoc* fashion to function perfectly, nobody fully understands them, least of all the user. In issuing advice, they are limited to the information with which they have been programmed and cannot take into account anything unforeseen. Since in any large area of human endeavour, such as warfare or business, it is impossible to foresee all contingencies, the program user must be wary of any advice the program gives, but many laymen have a misplaced faith in computers that is matched only by their ignorance of them.

Although it is safe to disregard Frude's more far-fetched predictions, including his "machines programmed in the art of seduction and able to give complete satisfaction", he is right in thinking that some people already tend to treat computers as people and that this tendency may be further fostered by manufacturers. He tends to view this development with elation, but many will find it abhorrent. It seems to be debasing the emotions to squander love, hate or sympathy on an inanimate object, and although it is natural to care for and even respect human artefacts, the pretence of dressing up a computer as a person is odious. Moreover, however much intelligent computers come to display, it would be wrong to attribute consciousness to them, since consciousness is associated with the brain and there is no reason to suppose that it could ever be a property of silicon chips, regardless of the complexity of the computations they perform. Since computers will play an increasing part in everyone's life, we would be wise to remember that they are only machines, that they are not capable of affection or sympathy and that they are at least as fallible as people, though in different ways.

a friend. Far from concealing the problem of death from their children, Victorian parents went to the opposite extreme, reading them stories which dwelt on the death-bed and requiring them to take part in elaborate funeral rituals.

Postman advances his argument by flouting the basic rules of historical method. He refuses to pay any attention to distinctions of geographical context or social class. His assertions about the invention of childhood are concerned with Europe, whereas his claim that television is destroying childhood relies exclusively on American evidence. He fails to test his general hypothesis against evidence drawn from other cultures, with the result that he establishes no necessary link between the ubiquity of television and the disappearance of childhood. He ignores the way in which concepts of childhood varied with "race". Instead, he fixes on a specific notion of childhood, popular only with the literate middle classes in a particular period, and generalizes about it. Much of his evidence is couched in a persuasive, if not a convincing, manner. Of all the indications that childhood is disappearing, he assumes that "none is more suggestive than the fact that the history of childhood has now become a major industry among scholars", while historians are motivated by nostalgia for a lost world. By the same logic, the fashion for the history of death suggests that people are no longer "die". His argument is mechanically monocausal. He ignores the media on children against the influence of demographic trends or of the function of the family or of the economy.

within the child-centred family and regimented within schools. But now the cycle of history has turned full circle; the distinction between children and adults is disappearing. American children are adopting the behaviour and outlook of their elders. They rob banks, take heroin and catch herpes. Simultaneously, many American adults are regressing to the intellectual and emotional level of children. They refuse to shoulder responsibilities and are incapable of abstract reasoning. Postman seems to suggest that more and more of his fellow-countrymen are like the hero of *Being There* confused by an incomprehensible society, motivated by the pursuit of synthetic images, and suspended permanently between childhood and adulthood.

Postman's book is an exercise in instant history, concocted out of a mixture of Philippe Ariès's theory, Marshall McLuhan's theory, and Mary Whitehouse's prejudices. Its hypothesis is flawed, its reasoning is confused, and its evidence is defective. Its main contention, that adults managed to use the printing press to preserve childhood innocence, is contradicted by even the most superficial acquaintance with the historical literature. It rests on an exaggerated notion of the pervasive influence of literacy education. Sir Osbert Sitwell's quip that he was educated "in the holidays from Eton" points to the obvious role of conversation and personal observation in children's learning. It ignores the extent to which children in what Postman regards as the Golden Age of Childhood were confronted with the stark realities of sex and death.

Throughout this period most lower-class families probably slept in the same room, so that their children could not avoid learning about birth and copulation. Even the children of the respectable could contrive to witness adult sexuality. As any reader of Walter's *Secret Life* will know, the plain facts of demography show that most children before the twentieth century would witness the death or serious illness of a parent, a sibling, or

its contents. We do not, as we get older, tend to shift our allegiances to more sophisticated programmes: Television acts as a "total disclosure medium", bombarding its audience, regardless of their age, with a plethora of information about vice, violence, illness and death. America is now witnessing the birth of a new type of man: the adult-child.

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Difficult women

Alan Macfarlane

JOHN PUTNAM DEMOS

Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England 543pp. Oxford University Press. £17.50. 0 19 503131 8

Books about witchcraft, like witchcraft trials, come in waves. There is a lull in activity, then they burst forth. After one such lull in the second half of the 1970s, important books on witchcraft in Scotland by Christina Lerner, on Basque witchcraft by Gustav Henningsen, and now on New England witchcraft by John Putnam Demos have all recently appeared. Like younger sibling wars, too, they are the end result of long and complex processes. Demos tells us that "the book itself spans a good six years in the writing; the inquiry goes back two decades".

The aim of Demos's analysis is twofold. First, and above all, he wishes to make colonial New England come alive again: "I want readers to share my own experience of knowing the common folk and common life of a distant time." Finding that most methods of analysis meant that "the scholars were slipping through the scholarly cracks", he bases his book on what he calls "Biography". In theory only the first three chapters come under this heading, but in practice almost every chapter tells stories. As Demos explains, he started to write stories around particular individuals or trials, and these stories "grew now to case studies" are "the truly core" of the book. They rely on court records, particularly the vivid depositions or accounts by Puritan ministers, which are then "fleshed out with elements of background, of context, and (at least occasionally) of overt interpretation".

These vignettes are fascinating. The biography of the witch Rachel Clinton, for example, allows us to see into the social world of a humble, later seventeenth-century family. In this account, or in that of the male witch John Godfrey in the following chapter, as well as in the horrific possession of Elizabeth Knapp, or the mysterious events surrounding Caleb Powell, we receive the shock of surprise and immediacy which Le Roy Ladurie achieves in parts of *Montaillou*. As the author rightly claims, "For evident human interest, for richness of detail, for all they reveal about the intersection of character and culture" such materials are "unsurpassed among extant materials from the seventeenth century". The re-creation of ordinary life and speech, and of the world of early American settlers, communities is very well done and makes much of the book a great pleasure to read. In his principal aim, therefore, Demos has succeeded.

A second aim clearly is to contribute to our understanding of why witchcraft occurred as it did, why particular individuals were accused and others were accusers, why belief in it rose and declined. While much of Demos's analysis is important, it is not quite so clear that major progress has been made here. This is not surprising given the fact that little of the material is new and much of it has been analysed very extensively before. Even though Demos has wisely concentrated on the case-study materials, away from generalizations, he still seems to be getting an impoverished, not to say distorted, view. He is still covering well-known territory. His analysis is conducted under the three headings of "Psychology", "Sociology" and "History". Of these, "psychology" is by far the least convincing.

Demos's basic psychological assumption is a welcome one; namely, that the seventeenth-century character has to be analysed as recognizably human, so "external", consisting of "a set of behaviour and snatches of conversation that, plausible analysis is, and is impossible". Frequently this is done in a safe, perceptual ground. "Cloud-cuckoo-land, Whilman's poetry began to lead to 'diminutive power' as soon as the 'perceived world' ceased to lead

families of particular victims are simply too thin.", or, in relation to the suggestion that victims fell ill psychosomatically as a result of fear and anxiety: "Any such diagnosis of this type would require close observation of the victim over an extended period of time; and it cannot be forced on admittedly fragmentary materials from centuries ago." Elsewhere he writes of the need to guess, because the "records" are devoid of developmental reference – hence the need to revert once again to procedures of inference". At best his guesses are suggestive; but frequently he makes fairly implausible suggestions based on no evidence, for example that John Godfrey the bachelor was a "latent homosexual" or that Elizabeth Knapp was traumatized by the loss of her parents' love when a younger sibling was born, and by her father's promiscuous life, so that she finally had to rely on the clergyman, Willard, "she needed his regularly available presence to maintain the integrity of her all-too-fragile self".

Demos has a tendency to fire off a series of intriguing questions and then lamely to admit that there is no evidence so we will never know the answers to them: "Was there also some veiled complicity – such as one often finds in habitual victims? The question must be asked, even though the records will not support an answer." This stretches the reader's patience, as does the catchy style: "Elizabeth in her fits had become a corporeal bomb, observed in the process of exploding", which sometimes degenerates into triteness: "Every culture has its whirlpools of callousness, of cruelty, of failure, of anality and orality, of narcissism and projection really helps. It takes us away from the individuals and their context into obscure and ultimately unsatisfactory abstract speculations which do not help us, to solve any of the central questions about witchcraft."

Fortunately, Demos's sociological approach is much more successful than the psychological. Through a combination of trial and local records, he is able to draw many conclusions about the 234 "cases" of witchcraft which are recorded for New England: for example, that the "typical witch" was female, middle-aged, of English background, married but with few children, often involved in conflict with other family members, often accused of other offences, of relatively low social position, abrasive, contentious and stubborn. In a series of community studies, we are shown the neighbourhood and spatial links between accuser and accused. A number of the negative findings are as important as the

positive ones. There was practically no sign of the active "cunning folk" or white witches who played such an important part in Old England, though in other respects most of the details of the cases are very similar to what was found in the English counties from which the settlers had come. We are told that "there is little sign of generalized (or structural) conflict between the sexes" since many of the evidence that wider family relationships were important: "accusations of witchcraft almost never followed blood-lines... there are no grounds here for associating witchcraft with rooted – and 'structural' – tensions in the lives of families or kin". It is the personal element, the character of the principal actors, and particularly the fact that much of the tension and concern centre round "menopausal women", which is most noticeable, and a combination of sex, ageing and often a deteriorating social position which led to growing fears and eventual accusation of witchcraft.

In the final section, entitled "History", the emphasis changes from cross-sectional analysis to the history of whole communities. Thus, we are given a village study over four decades of Weathersfield and Hampton, whose story is carried on through oral memories for the eighteenth century. These community biographies provide a vivid insight into New England life, focused on a series of tragic events. They lead Demos to advance certain hypotheses, though, as he admits, "generalization based on two cases is hazardous". He tries to link together "harms" (that is, natural disasters, such as epidemics or harvest failures), "signs" (comets, eclipses, etc) and "controversies" (internal and external disputes or wars which involved the whole community). He believes that he sees a pattern where, by witchcraft, tensions flared alongside "signs" and "harms", but abated when the whole community was involved in a major dispute of a religious or political nature. This is an intriguing suggestion but not totally convincing and even Demos is forced to admit that the "pattern is rough and incomplete along several of its edges, and its inner meaning is far from clear". But what he certainly has shown is that "Witchcraft was no meandering sideshow, isolated from the larger history of early New England. On the contrary, it belonged to and in – that history virtually from beginning to end."

Despite its repetitions, its occasional verbosity, and the fact that in practice Demos's divisions between his four separate approaches are dispensed with, this is an interesting, thought-provoking and readable book.

Climbing cloudwards

Imre Salusinszky

HYATT H. WAGGONER

American Visionary Poetry 226pp. Louisiana State University Press. £8.75. 0 8071 1051 5

"Vision" has fallen on hard times, through its over-use as a term of general approbation. Hyatt H. Waggoner's suggestion is that we revise "vision" by connecting it to "the act of seeing", itself reconstituted as a result of "experimentation" in the "vision laboratories". This experimentation has rejected any mechanistic or photographic explanation of perception, insisting that even "literal" sight involves interpretation, symbolization and discovery.

To qualify as "visionary" in Waggoner's sense, poetic meaning or value must be grounded in a perceived scene or object. The careers of many of the poets discussed (they are Whitman, Crane, Williams, Roseluke, A. R. Ammons and David Wagner) are traced as metaphorical climbs (but not poetic falls) from safe perceptual ground. "Cloud-cuckoo-land, Whilman's poetry began to lead to 'diminutive power' as soon as the 'perceived world' ceased to lead

directly to "visions of the completion of what was potential in the seed". Ammons's poetry became "self-pitying, self-indulgent, and boring" when he turned away from "the laws of the microscopic and macroscopic physical and temporal world".

The general conclusions drawn from this study seem conventional, if diluted, Romantic. "Visionary poetry leads to an identity between perceiver and perceived, and 'can enrich our lives, making them seem more meaningful'. But the submerged anti-Romantic polemic in the book is suggested by the repeated denigration of Stevens, portrayed as a solipsist turning his back on unpleasant realities. Stevens is here related to Blake, and is seen as less of a visionary poet than Williams, who is related to Wordsworth.

Stevens, though, was not an Idealist, believing (as Waggoner notes) that "the greatest poverty is not to live in a physical world". Blake, too, insists upon grounding vision in "minute particulars", and affirms that "the eye sees more than the heart knows". Blake's definition of visionary poetry as "an endeavour to restore what the ancients called the golden age, whatever it may now mean, will probably continue to mean more to poets and critics than anything discovered in optics."

Rise of the planters

Betty Wood

GLORIA L. MAIN

Tobacco Colony: Life in Early Maryland, 1650-1720 326pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £24.30. 0 691 04693 X

During the half century or so after 1680 the Tidewater Chesapeake underwent a remarkable transformation, and one which exerted a profound influence, in both the short and the longer term, on all aspects of life in that region. Put early in the century the Tidewater was transformed from a slave-holding to a slave society.

By the 1670s tobacco was firmly established as the Chesapeake's major export crop, but what had always been a volatile tobacco economy was in deep recession. Although blacks had been present in the region since 1619 they still accounted for only a small fraction of the population and were in no sense essential, or deemed to be essential, for the successful functioning of the Tidewater economy. Most blacks served for life, but as yet they had not been debased as a matter of public policy to the legal status of chattel slaves.

The albeit temporary unfreedom of so many of the Chesapeake's white inhabitants was far more striking than either the size or the economic significance of the black element. The tobacco economy depended, as it had since the 1620s, upon the recruitment in Britain of men and women who were prepared to work for a fixed, and often arduous, term in exchange for their passage to America. As remarkable as this heavy dependence upon indentured servants was a chronic social and political instability which found its most overt expression in Bacon's Rebellion, and which, much to the consternation of local elites, sometimes involved blacks and whites acting in concert.

By the 1720s the situation could not have been more different. After about 1713 tobacco prices, and thereby the overall economic health of the Chesapeake, had shown a marked improvement. The labour base of the tobacco economy had shifted from voluntary white to involuntary black servitude and in both Virginia and Maryland the essential conditions of chattel slavery had become enshrined in public law. But this was not the sum total of the Chesapeake's transformation. Now the region was characterized by an impressive degree of social and political stability. A clearly defined planter elite enjoyed a virtually unchallenged hold on the reins of power. All whites, regardless of whether they held slaves, had been persuaded that they had little in common with, and much to fear from, the Tidewater's blacks. An ill-defined racial prejudice had given way to an explicit and pervasive racism.

The highly complex relationship between tobacco, black oppression, and white freedom has always fascinated colonial historians and, as Betty Wood's *Tobacco Colony* deals with several themes that have been well ventilated in recent years. Even so, her book adds to our knowledge of early Maryland and for that reason is to be applauded. However, *Tobacco Colony* is not without its defects.

Although there are some notable exceptions – E. S. Morgan's *American Slavery, American Freedom* (1975) springs immediately to mind – much of the research on the early Chesapeake has been relatively narrow in its scope. This is not to denigrate the value of this work because such detailed and technically sophisticated studies were long overdue. Yet it is greatly to Professor Main's credit that she has tried to fit together the pieces of the jigsaw into a more comprehensive picture of early Maryland. But unfortunately an over-dependence upon quantitative techniques has resulted in an irritatingly incomplete analysis.

Professor Main begins by outlining Maryland's demographic and economic development after 1650 (she has

little to say about the first twenty years of the colony's history) and closely follows Paul Clemens in emphasizing the responsiveness of the Tidewater to the vagaries of the North Atlantic economy. As she goes on to argue, what had always been a "boom and bust" tobacco economy effectively shaped both the accumulation and distribution of wealth in Maryland and, by the late seventeenth century, the decision of those who could afford it to switch from white servants to more profitable black slaves.

Gloria Main explores this transition in her third chapter, and in a discussion which provides some useful information, but which does not add much that is new by way of argument, she allies herself with those who have argued that the dramatic change in the Tidewater's labour base had far more to do with changed economic and demographic circumstances than it did with racial attitudes.

Having ascertained the manner in which wealth was generated and distributed (and the picture she paints of an increasingly unequal society is entirely convincing) Main goes on to consider the material conditions of life in early Maryland. It is here that one takes issue with her: not because of what she says but because of what she chooses to ignore.

In recent years we have witnessed a methodological revolution in early American history. Hitherto unknown or neglected records – wills, inventories, and the like – have been sought out and subjected to statistical analysis of a type unthought of by previous generations of scholars. Such an approach has often resulted in the colonial experience being presented in the most mechanistic terms, as a world which can be explained by graphs and equations. Such a methodology, which Main tends to favour, is one which many historians find at best unconvincing and at worst incomprehensible.

Basing her discussion upon a rigorous examination of a wide range of source materials, Main outlines the material comforts enjoyed by Marylanders. Servants and slaves, "Poorer Planters" and "Middle and Affluent Planters", but somewhat surprisingly perhaps, not women are all considered separately. What emerges is a fascinating account of the diet, housing, clothing and so on of each of these groups. Main could scarcely have wrong more from the records. But as is so often the case, correlations have to be made. Many of those established here are both valid and credible, but others leave one bemused by the extremes to which quantification can be taken. For example, what are we supposed to make of the comment that although "there appears to be some relationship between relative affluence, books, and chamber pots... A man was equally unlikely to own a chamber pot if he possessed £20 or ten times as much, had a Bible or did not have a Bible" (page 246)?

Professor Main's interpretation attaches insufficient weight to ideas of debt. Her Maryland is one, in which religion and ideology play a secondary role to impersonal economic and demographic forces. One is left with only a vague impression of how the groups discussed actually perceived their situation and prospects within an increasingly unequal and racially divided society. Main concedes that she has "dwelled at length on the economic and demographic consequences of tobacco culture and said rather little about the meaning of living with those consequences" and rests her defence on the quite amazing proposition that "This is the most exclusive of subjects and one better suited to the arts of the novelist than to the skills of the historian". This, fortunately, is not an opinion shared by all economic and social historians.

Tobacco Colony provides an excellent discussion of the material conditions of life in early Maryland and for that reason ranks as an important contribution which demands the close attention of colonial historians. However, we still await a fully rounded account of life in that colony during the critical half-century after 1680.

These lives, lived on the vast Anatolian plain, were somehow brutal, yet they also produced the cohesiveness that bound the Armenians tightly together, and which kept their culture alive in their modern exile.

